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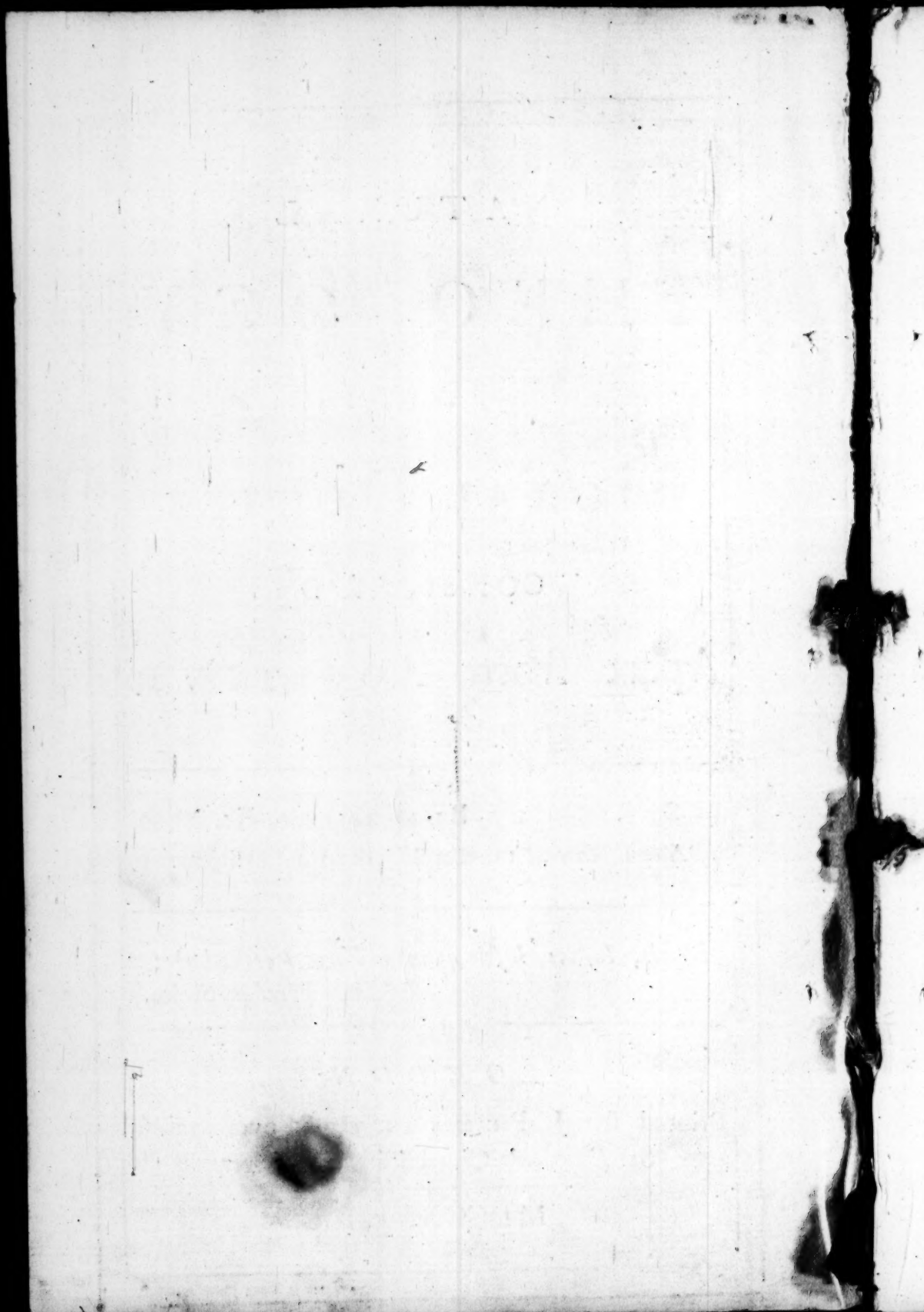
NATURAL
THEOLOGY:
OR,
MORAL DUTIES
CONSIDER'D
Apart from POSITIVE.

By Sir RICHARD BLACKMORE, Kt. M.D.
And Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians.

Nescis, Insane, nescis quantas Vires Virtus habet.
Cicero Paradox. Stoica.

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T H E
P R E F A C E.



Ince, in this degenerate Age, so great an Apostacy from the Belief, as well as Practice, of Natural and Reveal'd Religion, (while Impiety and Immorality alternately produce, confirm and strengthen one another) has spread its Contagion so far over this Nation, that Atheism and Infidelity, which formerly lurk'd in Corners as ashamed to own publickly their Characters, have at length taken Courage to throw off the Mask; while the Ministers and Champions of the Prince of

Darkness with daring Confidence not only in Conversation, but from the Press, insult the Christian Religion, and labour to subvert its divine Institution; and since in the mean time they do not form and publish any Confession of their own Faith, or Scheme of Divine Principles, tho' call'd upon earnestly to do it, nor substitute any other System of Religious Doctrines, which they would recommend to be embraced by Those who can be perswaded by them to renounce Christianity; there is Reason to suspect, that their Aim is to abolish the Belief of the Deity, and all Moral Obligations that we lye under from the Laws of Nature, and so to set Mankind at entire unlimited Liberty to act as they please, without Remorse or Fear of Punishment: Since then we are, in respect of Devotion and Virtue, in this terrible Situation, while the Enemies of the Messiah's, and the Subjects and Friends of Satan's Kingdom, are so audacious, powerful and numerous, it must certainly be
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the Duty of every sincere Christian that is endowed with proper Talents for such an Undertaking, to use his utmost Endeavours to check the Progress of this pernicious Evil, by standing up in the Defence of his Religion, dearer to him than his Life, as it must be if he is a Christian indeed ; and this is to express the purest Religious Zeal, and the truest Love to God and Man.

Nor is Great Britain destitute of Honourable Examples of this Kind ; Worthies who with Heroick Zeal, resistless Courage, and wise Conduct have signaliz'd their Pens, and made a noble Stand in this glorious Cause. And as many Ecclesiastick Combatants have engag'd in the present intestine War against the Atheist, and the Antichristian Party, and have gain'd those Lawrels that will for ever adorn their Memory ; so the like Many have done in the Age before, in this and Foreign Nations, and their excellent Labours on this Subject, written with such
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convincing Reason, Learning and good Sense, would, I perswade my self, if attended to with Diligence and impartial Contemplation, have been abundantly sufficient to conquer the Prejudices of the Disbelievers of a Deity, and the Christian Revelation. But since this impious, as well as unchristian Race of Men obstinately persevere in their Opinions, and, as there is Reason to fear, get Ground, and multiply Profelytes in this loose Age, I look upon it as my Duty to attempt, to the Extent of my Abilities, their Conviction and Recovery, by adding fresh Arguments, or enforcing and giving more Perspicuity to those produc'd by other Writers on these Subjects; it being evident, that Authors of a different Genius and way of thinking, may prevail with some that resist the Light and Evidence offer'd by others not so adapted to their Taste and Manner of Conception,

Besides, the Leaders of these inflexible Enemies of Piety and Christianity, like

the notorious Hereticks of the Church of Rome, that have so miserably rent and divided the Christian World, are continually publishing new Writings to confute their Adversaries, and make ill Impressions on the ignorant or unsteady People, while they leave a Multitude of excellent Treatises unanswer'd; and therefore they make it necessary for us to attack them afresh, confute their false Reasoning, and protect the Nation from being impos'd upon by their audacious Assertions or trifling Sophistry. I have therefore endeavour'd, in this Book, to clear up the Evidence of Natural Religion, against the Atheist and Scoffer; and then, if Life and Health will permit, to publish another in Vindication of Christian Revelation.

In this Performance I have follow'd the Syllogistical Manner of arguing, as most proper for such Subjects. This Method of Disputation consists in deducing, from Self-evident and Indemonstrable Principles,

Principles, Conclusions that afterwards serve for Principles, whence to collect in the same Manner a successive Train of Consequences, which contain as great Certainty or Probability as the Premises whence they were collected. Whatever Knowledge is acquired by Man is dependent on the Senses, as administering the first and necessary Occasion of forming our Ideas, or a causa sine qua non. When the Images of external Objects affect the sensitive Organs, the animal Spirits residing there being put into Motion, and returning to the Brain, communicate their Impressions to the chief Arbitrer or Sensorium, which occasion simple Perception or uncompounded Ideas, and this is called the direct perceptive Operation of the Intellect; but when the Mind turns its Eye upon itself, and from this its direct Action knows that it knows; and then contemplating and abstracting the essential Properties, common to all the Individuals of each Kind,
forms

forms universal and abstracted Ideas, which are dependent on the Senses no farther, than as the Senses convey to the Mind the first Images, whence by the Exercise of Reason general or common Notions are afterwards collected, and coherent Chains of instructive Propositions are produc'd; and this is call'd the reflex and abstracting Operation of the Mind. Science depending upon the Evidence of our Senses, is therefore look'd upon the most sure and unerring, because it is the necessary Foundation of all other Sciences; and should that be subverted, farewell to all Knowledge; and therefore the Church of Rome is so far from being endowed with Infallibility, that her Doctors have demolish'd the Foundations of all Certainty, by asserting that the Senses of Millions of Men are every Day deceiv'd in the Eucharist. For how can they prove any thing to me, that deny the Infallibility of healthful Senses rightly dispos'd? If they

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say,

say, the Church of Rome, which is only a corrupt Part, is the Whole infallible Church, and that Holy Scripture and Tradition prove her to be so, let them (setting aside the Testimony of our Senses as such as can't be depended on) shew how they can prove there are any such Things as Scriptures or Tradition, either Sacred or Profane, or any thing else. It is therefore most clear, that, if the Evidence of our Senses is fallacious, no Proposition whatsoever can be demonstrated, the Pillar that supports the Truth of all Knowledge being subverted, that is, the certain Suffrage of our sensitive Organs. And therefore while the Soul is incarnate, and exerts her Operations by the Mediation of corporeal Instruments, it always covets that Sort of Perception; that Way of receiving Knowledge being more natural, easy and familiar, than the forming of Universal Notions or abstracted Ideas, remote from the Cognisance of the Senses.

And hence it is, I imagine, that some Gentlemen skilful in Mathematicks would reduce all Methods of Proof or Demonstration to the Mechanical Way of Argumentation, as presuming that to be most evident and certain; so the learned Author of Natural Religion delineated, imitating some few others, uses the Geometrical or Mechanical Manner of proving his Assertions; and some Physicians likewise are fond of introducing Mathematical and applying Mechanical Rules of Reasoning, to shew the Regularity or Irregularity of the Humours, Blood and Spirits, the Nature of Diseases, and the Method of Cure.

As all Things Perfect are equally Perfect, so likewise all Things Certain are equally Certain. And therefore, notwithstanding Certainty is various in respect of the different Scientifick Means or Methods of producing it, yet there is no Certainty, when produc'd, less in Degree than another; for if this were not

so, the inferior Certainty must be allay'd with some ground of Doubting; but the essential Idea of all Certainty excludes from the Mind all actual Diffidence and Ground of doubting whatsoever; and therefore Mathematical, Physical, Metaphysical, Moral and Divine Certainty are in respect of each other equal, and incapable of receiving Magis and Minus, how much soever they differ in the Method of being collected. All Sciences have their proper and peculiar Principles and Mediums, whence they deduce their Conclusions, which are demonstrative and scientifick; and none of them can boast of superior Certainty; that is, the Mind can acquire no greater Satisfaction of the Truth of one than of another, nor harbour less Reason of doubting in any of them than in the rest: so that Moral Certainty is not inferior to Geometrical, nor Physical to Metaphysical. I am as fully convinc'd and possess'd of the Truth of this Conclusion, I exist,
collected

collected thus ; Whatever Thinks and Acts does Exist ; I think and act, therefore I exist ; as I can be of any Proposition demonstrated in Euclid.

In the like manner a Man, that was never out of England, may be as perfectly assur'd that there are other Countries, or that this Island is not the whole Terrestrial World, but that there are other Lands, Towns, Cities and People besides those he is acquainted with, as if he had really seen them with his Eyes : For if he founds, as he must do, his infallible Assurance of the Existence of those Countries and People, which he has seen, upon the decisive Judgment of his Senses that cannot be deceiv'd, it is much more probable that the Senses of one Man should be impos'd upon, than the Senses of many thousands, who declare they have seen such Kingdoms and Cities out of this Island ; nor is it morally possible, that so many thousands in different Towns and Countries, thro' all Ages, and

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among them often his nearest Friends and Relations, should conspire to impose upon his Belief, and mock him with such a forg'd Narration. This, I say, cannot be; for all Effects are produc'd by some competent Causes: now 'tis impossible to assign any such Cause, whence this Effect can be deriv'd, that is, such a Confederacy of all Mankind from the Beginning of all Time in all Ages and Places to put such a Cheat and Imposture upon him, for which Design as they could have no End, so they had no Opportunity and Means to execute it, nor can any Geometrical Demonstration afford me greater Assurance than this moral Certainty; for the last leaves the Mind without all Distrust or Reason of Doubtfulness, and the first can do no more.

Why then should Any apply a Mechanical Way of Argumentation to Moral, Medical or Divine Subjects, to which they do not properly belong? as if they could that way strike out greater Scientifick Light,

Light, than by the usual Syllogistical Method of Disputation: especially considering the Sciences which depend upon abstracted Ideas and general Notions, as Theology, Physicks, Metaphysicks and Moral Philosophy, are incapable of Ocular or Sensitive Evidence, and therefore cannot be the Subjects of such Demonstration: Hence Cartesius, tho' very skilful in Mathematical Knowledge, made little Use of it in his Philosophical and Metaphysical Writings. Nor does the celebrated Mathematician Dr. Isaac Barrow apply this Geometrical Way of Argumentation to Divine or Moral Subjects. Dr. Ward, Bishop of Sarum, has sometimes attempted it; but whether he has given greater Force to his Arguments by his Mechanical Way of managing them, let the judicious Reader determine. Besides, if this way of Disputation must be introduced into all Arts and Sciences, all Divines, Moralists, Physicians and Lawyers, before they can be Eminent in their

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Profession,

Profession, must first become great Mathematicians, and study the Geometrical Manner of Deduction; nor could there be any kind of Learning among Mankind without Mathematicks, nor any Certainty but only Geometrical, which is very absurd.

As to the following Treatise of Natural Religion, a Subject that has exercised the Pens of several excellent Writers, as well Foreigners as Natives, since Irreligion and Contempt of all Divine and Sacred Things, as well as the Disbelief of the Christian Revelation, notwithstanding the learned Labours of those Worthies who have engaged in this Controversy; I thought, as above suggested, I might be able to add greater Force, and set the Evidence in a stronger Light, as well as give a closer Connexion and a more perspicuous Method and Expression to the whole: In order to this, I have illustrated former Arguments, or added new, and have extended the
Laws

Laws of Nature and the Evidence of their Obligation much farther than has been done.

And others pursuing the same way of Disputation may stretch them much farther; for I think it will not be difficult to demonstrate, by the Exercise of Reason, all the Practical Moral Doctrines of the Gospel, except the Credenda, that is, the Articles of Faith relating to Christ, his Person, Incarnation, Sacraments, Mediatorial Office, the Resurrection, &c. But as to Rules that relate to the Government of our Thoughts, Passions and Practical Duties, or the Regularity of our Actions, I believe they may be all proved by the Dictates and Light of Nature.

Moral Obligations, or Natural Laws, being the Foundation of all Religion, and the Beginning of Divine Wisdom, I have been the more exact in the Deduction of them, and shewing whence they derive their binding Force, so as to constitute

our

our Duty, and make us receptive of Rewards and Punishments ; therefore these Religious Ideas and Moral Notions are antecedent to the Christian Institution, and Introductive and Preparatory of the Mind for the embracing of it : For it is not likely that Men that obstinately oppose the Divine Light display'd by Nature, deny Obedience to the Dictates and Laws of Reason, and stifle Convictions arising from the Leavings of inbred Conscience, should heartily Embrace a Religion supernaturally revealed, and submit faithfully to its Precepts that reinforce and recommand the Laws, which they have already with stubborn Wilfulness so long rejected and disobeyed. Our Saviour says, If you do the Will of God, you shall know of my Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self; that is, if you are faithful and obedient to Moral Truths already acknowledged, and do his Will collected by Reason and made known by the Light of

of Nature, as likewise by the Mosaick Institution, you will be prepared and disposed to believe my Revelation, and receive my Doctrines : so that to be good Pagans is the ready way to become good Christians.

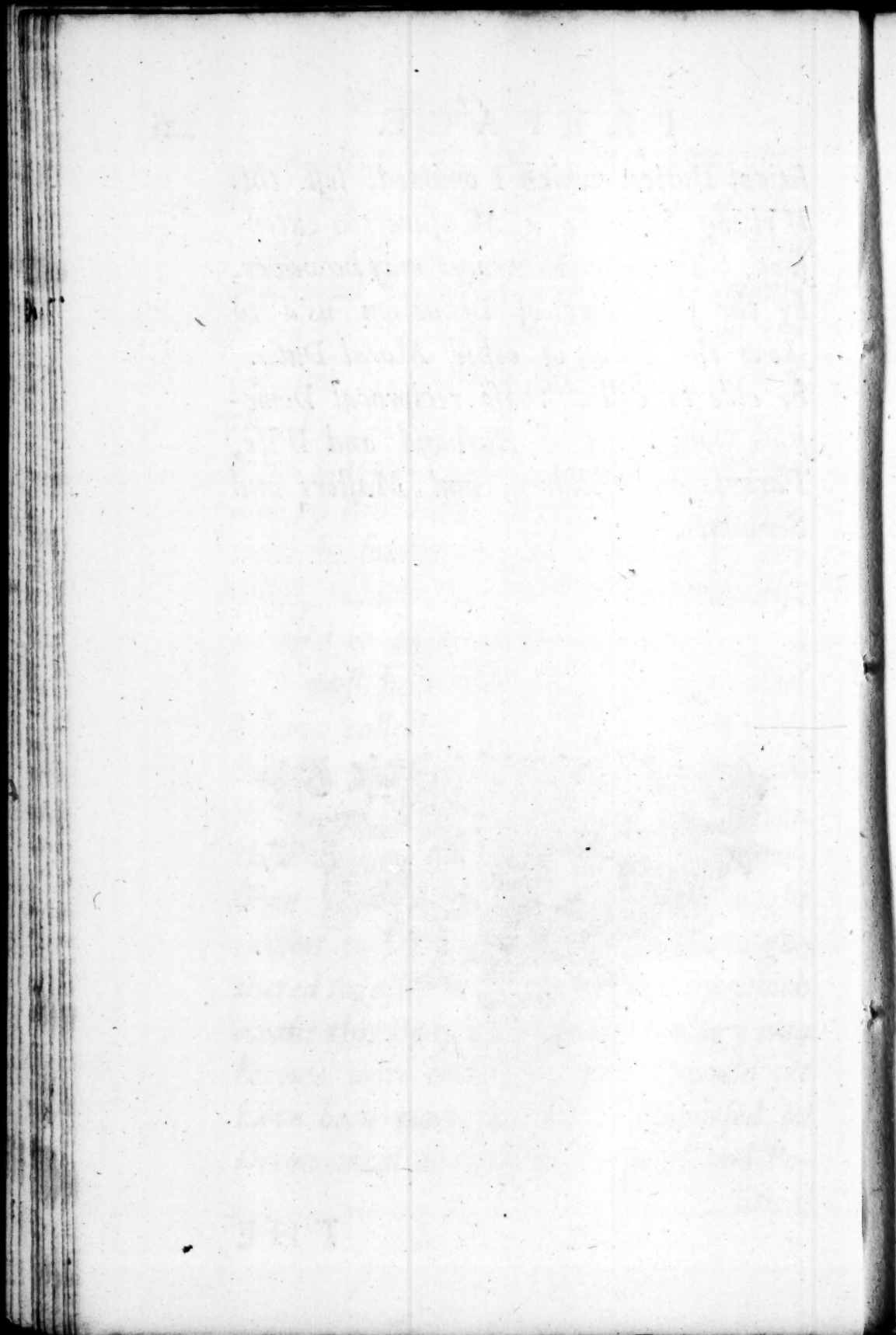
And since All to whom the Gospel has been preached and sufficiently promulgated, are bound to believe and obey it, by reason of the Divine uncontroul'd Evidence that confirms the Truth of it, and there cannot be found any Name given under Heaven by which any to whom the Gospel has been preached can be saved, but that of Christ, whence all Men will be acquitted or condemned according to their Submission or Disobedience to his Laws : So on the other Hand, those Nations on whom the Light of the Gospel never shone, nor the Sun of Righteousness ever rose, who live involved in the darkest Shades of Ignorance and Idolatry, and are Aliens to the Church of Christ, having no Law supernaturally communicated

communicated to them, are a Law unto themselves, as the great Apostle of the Gentiles tells the Romans; that is, they are bound to perform the Duties manifested by the Light of Reason, or the Dictates of Natural Conscience, which, tho' by the Fall of Adam it is much eclips'd, is not however quite extinguished; and by this Law shall the Heathen Nations be finally judged, and not by any other, which was never sufficiently discover'd or made known to them.

I must here admonish the Reader that I have collected the Sentiments on this Subject, that lye dispersed up and down in my other Writings, and have given them their proper Place and due Connection in these Papers, that so I might exhibit to the Reader all my Notions gathered together under one View, by which means this Body of Natural Theology may become more compleat; and it would yet have been more so, had I discoursed on Oeconomical as well as Personal and Political

litical Duties, which I omitted, lest this Writing should be a Measure too extensive. The judicious Reader may however, by the same way of Deduction us'd to shew the Force of other Moral Duties, be able to collect those reciprocal Domestic Obligations of Husband and Wife, Parents and Children, and Masters and Servants.





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Natural



Natural L A W S

A P A R T F R O M

P O S I T I V E.

S E C T. I.



THE Idea of Religion necessarily includes That of God, who is the Object of it, and therefore a Man must be convinced that the Divine Being Exists, before he can pay him any Religious Worship, or perform any Act of Obedience to him; and since there is no Way of demonstrating his Existence but by his Works of Creation and Providence, I will therefore shew that he is the Creator of all Things, and in the first Place that he is the Author of Man.

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2 *Natural Laws apart from Positive.*

As I am ascertained by my Self-consciousness and inward Perception, that I am in Being; so I am further assured of the Reality of my Existence by the first and clearest Exercise of Reason, that is, by a Demonstrative or Scientifick Deduction from my Operations. I think, reason, and move, and therefore am sure I have a Being; for Non-entitys can have no Motion or Activity: and as from those Operations I know that I Am, so from the Nature of them I know I am an Intelligent Being, endowed with Life and a motive Faculty.

And as thus I am certain, that I Am, so am I past all doubt that I have not Always Been; since if I always had existed, I must have remembered some of my past Actions or Passions, Delights or Sufferings, in the Space of more than seventy Years: Since therefore no Demonstration can be more evident and conclusive than this, that I have not existed for ever, it is very reasonable I should by a strict and impartial Enquiry seek some Satisfaction, how starting out of nothing I came first into Being.

I am very sure I did not make myself. If I had I must at the same Moment of Time have existed as a Cause, and not existed as an Effect, which is a manifest Contradiction.

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And besides, had I been the Author of my self, it is impossible but that I must have been conscious of it. I must have known my own Workmanship, and have been acquainted with the Nature and Structure of the Organs of my Body, and all its Springs of Sensation and Motion: And if I had made them I must have better understood the Principles of Cogitation, Perception and Reasoning, than I do; had they been my Productions I should have better told what Life is, how the Soul animates, quickens, and moves the Body, and have unravelled all the mysterious Operations of the intelligent Machine.

Had I conferred Being on my self, I should have ennobled my Mind with a clearer and more comprehensive Understanding, a more lively and capacious Imagination, a more penetrating Judgment, and a more tenacious Memory; and chiefly I should have endowed it with greater degrees of Moral Goodness and Piety: and as to my Body, I should have taken Care it should not have been obnoxious to so many Defects, Infirmities, Diseases, and at last Dissolution.

Thus far I am past all doubt. Let me enquire then if I am indebted to my Parents for my Being. I acknowledge thankfully that I owe them a great deal, but

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not my Being, as the Makers and Creators of it. For if my Parents had been my Authors, they must have been supposed to have known something of their Work, with which however they were unacquainted: they knew nothing of the Frame and Contrivance of my Body, nor of the sensitive Principle or intellectual Faculties and Powers of my Soul.

If they had made me they must have been capable of preserving me, which they were very willing, but utterly unable to do. They could neither command my Sex, nor my Complexion or Stature, nor the Time of my Birth, nor could they teach or enable me to grow, see, hear, breathe and move.

Nor could my distant Progenitors give me my Being, more than my immediate Parents: and in the same manner if we ascend Step by Step thro' the whole Scale of Individuals, we must at last stop at some Man, who did not by Generation derive his Being from any Parents, or else we must pass on and lose our selves in boundless Gulphs of Duration, and be obliged to acknowledge Unbeginning Succession, and Number actually Infinite, which, since still more may be added to it, is the greatest Absurdity.

Natural Laws apart from Positive.

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The Origine of Man according to *Epicurus* and *Lucretius*, who make Men at first to spring out of the Earth like spontaneous Vegetables, and afterwards to propagate their Species by Generation to this Time, is so inept and grossly imagined, that all endowed with common Sense have deserted them.

Nor can there be an infinite Succession of Parents and Sons, for then Succession must have been from Eternity; whence it must follow, that the Propagation of Mankind did never begin, for what is Eternal has no Beginning.

For as in immense Space there is no Center, which cannot be conceived without a determinate Circumference or Circumscription of which it is the Center, and nothing superior and inferior, which imply some fixed or determinate Object or settled Point of Space, in respect of which superior and inferior have their Names; so if we contemplate boundless Duration, we shall find eternal Succession is as vain a Notion; for Predecessors and Followers, Ancient and Modern, have the like Relation to some settled Point of Time, in respect of which the Denominations or Distinctions of antecedent and consequent are formed; and therefore an eternal Succession

6 *Natural Laws apart from Positive.*

sion of mortal Men is repugnant and contradictory to Reason.

Since then I did not exist of my self, nor received my Being from my Parents and Ancestors, nor can I be an Individual in a Chain of successive Links that never begun; to find out the Fountain and Origine of my Being it is necessary, since I am a made Being, to enquire after the Author that made me; and the same Enquiry may be entered upon for all the rest of Mankind, no less able to give Being to themselves than I; and if Men, who are intelligent Beings, are incapable of Self-existence, then sensitive, vegetable, and inanimate Things can never pretend to the high and unlimited Power of Self-Production.

By these Steps we arrive at the certain Knowledge of a first Cause, who must be Eternal and Self-existent: for if it could be supposed a first Cause had once not been, nothing ever could have had a Being, for want of a Cause to produce it; and besides, had that first Cause ever not existed, he never could have existed afterward, for he could not have existed of himself, for that contradicts the Supposition; and there was no other Cause existing that could have brought it out of Nothing into Being. Thus by the Light of Reason it is evidently

dently demonstrated, that there is a First, Eternal, Self-existent Cause of all Things.

There was nothing that more puzzled and confounded the ancient Philosophers of *Greece* and *Rome*, than to give a reasonable Account of the Existence of the wide and beautiful Frame of the Universe, while the Schools abounded with great Varieties of absurd and ill-imagined Schemes, to explain this Difficulty, and account for the Origine of Nature; which however may be all reduced and ranged under two Heads, That of *Democritus*, *Leucippus* and *Epicurus*, who formed the World by the fortuitous Concurrence or casual Rencounters and Collisions of solid, self-existent Atoms of various Figures and Sizes; and That of *Aristotle* and the Fatalists, who held the World was Eternal. The first is an idle and incoherent Scheme, since the conspicuous Marks of Contrivance, Counsel and Design, which appear to contemplative Enquirers into Nature, demonstrate with the clearest Evidence, that the Author must be an intelligent and wise, directing Cause: for Beauty, Regularity, Order, Design, and Disposition of Means and Ends, are utterly inconsistent with Fortune or Chance. To make a Train of contingent or accidental Events, the same Thing with an established Dependence, Subordination,

and Connexion of Means and Ends, is the highest Absurdity: For Beauty, Constancy, Order and Harmony, the Effects of Wisdom, Prædisposition and Design, and those of unguided Chance, are repugnant Ideas, and destructive of one another.

Nor is the Scheme of *Aristotle* and the Fatalists supported by stronger Dictates of Reason, who make the World to be Eternal and Coeval with the first supream Cause, not as Effects and Productions of his creative Will, but as necessary Emanations and Effluences from that Fountain of Being, which however exerts no Power in making, preserving or governing the Universe, nor concerns himself with the Administration of outward Affairs; while they set up Fate, an unsubstantial and vacuous Chimæra, the shadowy and unintelligible Creature of Imagination, as a superior and controuling Power over their highest Divinities.

Thus it appears most evident by natural Light, that there is a Creator to whom the Heavens and the Earth owe their Being, whom we call God.

*Of God's Attributes; and first of those
that are Absolute.*

AND by the same Light we are instructed, that our Creator must be Self-existent, that is an Uncaused and Independent Being: For had he derived his Essence from any Thing else, instead of being a Creator he must have been a dependent Creature, and have relied upon a superior, antecedent Cause for his Production and Conservation; and that Cause, if it be not necessary and self-existent, must depend upon a previous Agent that is so, and so on *in infinitum*: There is therefore a Self-existent, Necessary, and Independent Being, the Creator of all Things.

It is likewise a Dictate of Reason, that this self-existent Being is also Eternal, or without Beginning. For had there ever been one Period of Time, or Point of Duration when no Being was existent, it would have been impossible, as suggested before, that there ever should be any, for want of an efficient Cause to bring it forth: for no Production could have risen out of Non-existence, or sprung out of nothing, by the Power of a supposed Cause, that was not it self existent, and which there-
fore

fore must have required some other Cause to produce it, and that other Cause likewise having no Being, must demand the Agency of another to give it Birth, and so *in infinitum*.

Besides, as said before, if there ever had been a Time when no Being was existent, then if after that any Things come into Being, They must make themselves; and then as Causes they must have existed before themselves, and after themselves as Effects, which implies a flat Contradiction.

It is likewise a plain Dictate of Natural Reason that this Supreme Creator must be Almighty or Omnipotent, that is, that nothing should be out of the Compass of his efficient Power, which implies any Perfection in the Agent for the Production of it; for if it implies an Imperfection, (as to commit Moral Evil, or to perform Things repugnant and contradictory, which is no mark of Power but of Impotence, (it is not to be ascribed to the Divine Being. God's unlimited Power of doing all Things is clearly deduced from his Creative Energy; for what can be more difficult, or show more repugnancy and opposition to Agency, than to have nothing præ-existent to work upon? When we strain our Conceptions, and stretch our Imaginations ever so much to entertain a Notion of Creation, or causing Things

Things to rise out of Non-entity, it transcends the Force and Compass of Human Understanding to form an Idea of it ; and whatever Being can beckon to and awaken the unexisting Seeds of Things, replenish empty Space by his sole Word with innumerable Variety of Creatures, and drawing back the Veil or Curtain of Night and Darkness, display and set in view all the beautiful and surprizing Scenes of this capacious Theatre the World, must be acknowledged Omnipotent, that is, unbounded as to all Objects of Power.

Besides, when the Supreme Being is considered as the Original Fountain of all Virtue and efficient Energy inherent in the whole Collection of Created Things, that from him received with their Being all their motive Springs and active Principles, he must be acknowledged the Possessor of all Power and Agency in an eminent degree of Perfection, for he could not have communicated to his Creatures, what he had not in himself in unlimited Plenitude, and therefore the Author of all Power must be himself Almighty.

It is likewise discoverable by the Light of Nature, that the Creator of all Things must be their Preserver, and that his efficacious Will that produced them, must be continued to sustain them in Being, as long as
he

he pleases; for should he cease to will their Continuance without any positive Act of Power, they must relapse into their Primitive Non-existence, and be immediately annihilated. For it is not in the Power of Omnipotence to make an Omnipotent Creature; yet this would be the Consequence, if any Created Being could be Independent one Moment on the Creator's concurrent, unremitting Efficacy to support its Duration: for if it could be Independent for one Moment it must be possess of infinite Perfection of Being, and so be able to support it self for ever; for nothing more is required to its Self-Preservation for many Ages, than for one Moment. When the Creator willed the Existence of his Creatures, he willed likewise their determinate Continuance; for his efficacious Will is the Cause of all Futurity, or prolonged Duration of his Creatures; and this affords the genuine Idea of Annihilation, which is a ceasing to exist, or a falling out of Being, upon the Cessation of the Divine Concurrence, or his not willing their longer Existence.

It is likewise a Doctrine revealed by the Light of Nature, that God is Omniscient. By contemplating our own Nature we may infallibly know, that God is an Intelligent, Conscious, Free and Self-determining Being; for

for since he has endowed Man with a Power to know, to fix upon an End, and chuse Means to attain it, we may be certainly convinced that the Maker must possess these Perfections in a transcendent degree, for he could not have bestowed on the Intelligent World what he had not in himself to give; and we must thereupon conclude, that God is an unexhaustible and immense Fountain of Knowledge.

Besides, as he has made all Things, he must of necessity know what Creatures he has made, what Natures he gave them, and with what Properties and Principles of Motion and Energy he endowed each distinct Species; and since his Power can maintain all Things in their Being, their Duration depending on his Concurrence, he must certainly know how long any Individuals shall endure; and since they can Act no longer than he assists their Principles of Activity, he must know to what Creatures, and in what Measure, and in what Circumstances he will give his Aid, and then he must foreknow what their Actions will be, by knowing his own Will to concur with them for exerting the least Operation of their Faculties; for if they were in Understanding, Will, or Active Power, as said before, once Independent, they would be Independent and Self-sufficient

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cient thenceforward for ever: For God can no more make a Being Independent on his Power in Acting, than he can make him Independent for the Continuance of his Being, and if he should be Independent in one Act, he may be so in all. Since therefore the Supreme Being must know what Operations he will enable his Creatures to exert, he must fore-know them all, as well those that are call'd Contingent, as those that are Necessary; that is, the future Actions of a free Agent: for tho' an arbitrary Agent determines himself freely to this Action, or the contrary, as to the Moral Nature of it, which consists in its Agreement or Disagreement with an authoritative Rule of Action, yet as to the Physical Nature of it, which consists in the exerting of his Active Power, he must be dependent on the Creator's Assistance, as the General Cause; and therefore since God must fore-know what Acts of the Mind or Body he will enable Men to exert, and they can exert none without him, it follows that he must foresee contingent, as well as necessary Actions and Events, that is, what Acts of Volition, as to their Physical Nature and Power, he will concur with them to put forth. This will shew the Perfections of the Divine Nature are so great and unlimited, that he must needs
foresee

foresee all Events ; tho' I acknowledge that this Explanation is not free from Objection, nor is that a Wonder, since the Subject is so Abstracted and Sublime.

Nor could the Supreme Being be Infinite in Perfection did he not foresee contingent Events; for upon Supposition he did not, he would encrease in Knowledge, when these Events came to pass, and therefore his Knowledge could not be perfect before.

Another Dictate of right Reason is That of the Immenstity of the Supreme Being. And this Conclusion is deduced from the Principle of his Self-existence; for such a Being cannot be confined and circumscribed: for he that necessarily exists, and of himself, must exist in this, and that, and in all Places; for if he is necessarily here, he must be necessarily there, and every where; for necessary Existence cannot be circumscribed.

The Supreme Being must therefore Be in all Things, and in all Places; tho' perhaps it is more proper to say, that all Things and all Places are in Him; and therefore after we have applied with the most deliberate Attention to conceive the Nature of Space and Void, and grasp that dark and thin Expansion, tho' I say, should we strain our Imaginations, and put them on
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the utmost stretch to comprehend that Space which is filled with Created Beings, connected with that which lyes without the bounds and compass of Creation, that continually diffuses its empty Fields, extends it self still further, and always grows before us, we can perhaps form no Idea of it different from that of the Immensity of the Divine Being.

And if we consider that the uncaused and self-sufficient Creator of all Things has communicated to his various Creatures so much active Power, Wisdom and Goodness, that he has enriched and adorned the Heavens with so much Splendor and Magnificence, that he has furnished the Chambers of the Sky with numberless Stars and beautiful Constellations, each of which is probably a World far exceeding ours in Amplitude and Lustre; that he has conveyed and infused into the Sun an immense Ocean of Glory, which by its Light and Influence cherishes and enlivens the planetary Orbs, that rowl about him; if we likewise contemplate what Capacities and Virtues he has imparted to the Intellectual, Sensitive, Vegetable and Inanimate Creatures, which replenish the Earth; if, I say, we make these Reflections with Attention, and consider further that he is still able by his inexhaustible Power to create ten thousand

and more such Worlds and Systems, if he pleased, we must allow that it is an undeniable Dictate of right Reason that this Supreme Being, Maker of Heaven and Earth, is possesst of all possible Perfection.

Moreover, if we acknowledge God to be Self-existent or without a Cause, as above he is demonstrated to be, it will follow irrefragably that he is Immortal, and must endure for ever; for what can destroy a Being, whose Existence is necessary? and it will follow likewise with the clearest Evidence from his necessary Self-existence, that he is Immutable, that is, incapable of Change or Alteration; for if his Being or Substance was susceptible of Change, it might be obnoxious to Waste and Decay, and at length to Dissolution. Nor is there any Creature that has any Force or Power to cause any Change in him: for they have none but what is derivative and dependent upon God, and therefore cannot exercise it against him to do him hurt. It is true, Intelligent Creatures that are free and arbitrary Agents may break his Laws and rebel against his Ordinances, but this does not affect the Essence of the Almighty, and alter his Nature; and when God is said to repent or change his Purpose, the Change is wrought in Man, and not in Him; that is, when Man changes and re-

pents, he stands now in a different Relation to God's Justice than before his Repentance and change of Nature, being now no longer the Object of God's Displeasure, or obnoxious to Eternal Punishment, if he perseveres in that State.

Moreover, if we enquire into the absolute and metaphysical Nature of God, we shall find it is a clear Conclusion deduced by the Exercise of Reason, that the Great Creator is a Spiritual Being, that is, not Body or Matter; for should he be Corporeal, he must have the Properties of a Body, Extension and Cohesion of Parts, and be limited and circumscribed; for Matter cannot be extended *in infinitum*, for then there would be actually Existent an infinite number of Parts conspiring to make an immense Extension; but an infinite Number involves a direct Contradiction, for since more Unites may be added by the Mind, no Number can be boundless, for then it would be at once Infinite, and yet capable of receiving Addition.

Besides, were God compounded of Material Ingredients, he would be divisible and discernible into Parts, he might be acted upon by other Matter, he might at least by the Conception of the Mind be separated, and then would be obnoxious to Dissipation and Decay. If the Great Creator were
Matter,

Matter, then the Corporeal World must exist in him or out of him ; if in him, then there must be a Penetration of Bodies ; but if they exist in Space, where God is not, then his Being is not immense, nor can he Necessarily exist ; for what exists Necessarily, must, as said above, exist every where, since Necessity cannot be restrain'd.

Besides it is proved above, that God is a Conscious, Intelligent, Arbitrary Agent, which Perfections cannot be ascribed to Matter, for the Idea of Matter does not essentially include Understanding, Reflection, and a Power of Chusing and Refusing. It is true Mr. *Lock* has said, which I wonder at, that he is not certain that the Omnipotent Being may not be able so to refine, dispose and move Corporeal Particles as to make them receptive of Cogitation and other Intellectual Qualities ; yet no Man but the *Epicurean* Atomist ever was so extravagant as to assert that Matter in it self was essentially an Intelligent and Elective Agent. It is very plain that Intellectual and Self-determining Powers are separated by the Mind from Corporeal Things, but it is not possible to conceive any Object without its Essence, or what is essential to it : Matter is not then of it self necessarily and essentially a conscious free Agent, and therefore cannot con-

stitute the Supreme Being. If it be said that there is another Principle superadded to Matter to make the Deity, that is a distinct, Incorporeal, Intellectual Principle, which we call Mind, that informs and pervades his Material Substance, I ask if this Principle, this *Anima Mundi*, be united vitally and essentially to Matter? if so, God is a Compound Being, formed, like Man, of Matter and Mind, and then all Things would be God, every Plant and Fly and Worm would be Gods; God, and Man his Votary, would be the same, nor would the Sacrifice be a distinct Thing from the Deity to whom it is offered; and then Gods would be as common and cheap as the Grass in the Field, or the Sand in the Desert; nor is it less inconsistent with or shocking to Reason, to imagine every Thing is God, as that there is no such Being at all.

But by granting the Existence of Mind an intelligent and arbitrary Principle, these Men must acknowledge the Being of God, though by a coarse and absurd Way of thinking, while they suppose that he animates and vitally informs the material Universe. But if they say God and Matter are two distinct Beings, and that they are not so united as to constitute a Being of a third Appellation, but that the Mind
pervades,

pervades, guides and governs Matter, without being an informing, intelligent Principle, essentially combined with it, then they most evidently yield what we are contending for, not only that God Is, but that he is an Immaterial Being, which we call a Spirit.

And thus, by certain Conclusions deduced from self-evident Principles, we come to know there is a God, and that he is a Spirit infinite in all Perfection of Being, Causeless or self-existent, Eternal, Immortal, Almighty, Omniscient, Immense, and Unchangeable.

If it be objected, that to call God a Spirit, is not to exhibit a positive Idea of the Deity, but a negative, not to tell us what he Is, but what he Is not; for to call him a Spirit Incorporeal, or Immaterial, amounts to no other Conception but a Negation of Matter: I reply, that the Conceptions of Mind, Life, Power, Intelligence, Consciousness, free or arbitrary Agency, which are included in the Idea of God, are all positive; and if we are incapable of forming any Conception of his intrinsic, spiritual, metaphysical Nature, but only such as removes or excludes Matter from him, that is, if we only think of him as a Substance, that is not Matter, we must observe that we have no other Idea

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than this of the intrinsic Substance of any corporeal Beings themselves; for we are unable to penetrate the secret Nature or Essence of Matter, and can only conceive it by its Modes, Extension, Continuity or Cohesion of Parts, Solidity and Gravity, relative Qualities, that like Splendour, Hardness, Siccity, &c. have their Appellation from their acting upon our Senses; but the Substantial *Subjectum* or *Substratum*, which supports these inherent Modes and Qualities, we know nothing of; so that, after all, we have as much an Idea of the intrinsic Nature and Substance of the Divine Being, as a Spirit, as we have of Matter it self, which Men imagine they comprehend so well.

Since then the intrinsic Nature of a Spiritual and a Corporeal, a Material and Immaterial Substance, stand upon the same Foot, and are equally unknown to us, that is, Things of which we can form no positive Conception, it is plain that when we form an Idea of God, by saying he is a Spirit, we do not conceive him by a Denial, or Negation of the Substance of Matter, of which we have no Conception at all, but only of its Modes and Qualities, which are the Objects of our Senses. Should you ask me what is Matter? I would reply, an extended, ponderous Substance, consisting
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of Coherent Parts, and endowed with Qualities that affect our Senses. If you farther demand, what is that substantial *Substratum* which supports those Inherent Modes and Qualities? I can only answer, that it is a Substance which has Extension and Cohesion of Parts, and such Qualities as affect our Organs of Sensation. Thus, if the Thing be thoroughly searched, the Conception of the intrinsic Substance of Matter is no more positive, than that of Spirit, each of them being formed by a Denial of each other, that is, Spirit is a Substance that is not Matter, and Matter a Substance that is not Spirit.

Thus by the due Exercise of Reason, without the Aids of Revelation, Man by just Deductions and Inferences from Self-evident Principles, may come to a certain Knowledge that there is a God, and that he is a Causeless or Self-existent Spirit, Infinite in all Perfection of Being, Almighty, Omniscient, Immutable and Immortal.

And further it is discoverable by the Light of Nature, that he is the Only God, or that there is no other God besides him; for should we suppose a Plurality of Gods we must suppose them all to be Omnipotent, and if so, then each of them may effect whatever he pleases, and then should

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one God will one Thing, and another the contrary, while they are both Omnipotent, upon such a Contrast or Opposition of Wills, either one must yield, and so cannot be Omnipotent, that is no God, or else the two contending Almighty Powers, while the Omnipotence of one equally balances that of the other, could produce no Effect at all, neither could either of them gain what he willed.

Besides, should there be more Self-existent, Independent Gods, they must be Co-ordinate, Infinite Powers; and then no one of them could be acknowledged the Supreme God; nor could we know to which of them we should ascribe the Creation of the World, or the Providence that preserves and governs it; nor should we be able to find out to which of them we owe our Being, and whom we should own as our Governor and Benefactor.

The Unity of the Godhead is so evident a Dictate of the Light of Nature, that most of the ancient Pagan Philosophers, particularly *Socrates* and *Plato*, acknowledged one first Deity; and even the worst of Idolaters owned *Jupiter* as their Supreme God, (a loose one indeed!) and whom they worshipped as the Father of Gods and Men; and therefore they looked on the rest of the Divinities, even the old Celestial

lestial Gods, as well as the upstart inferior Race, as subordinate and subject to him; so absurd and inconsistent was the Notion of a Plurality of Co-ordinate Gods in their Opinion.

I have now shewn what may be discovered of the Being and absolute Perfections of God by the Light of Nature; I come now to demonstrate how his Relative Attributes are likewise to be found out by the Exercise of Reason.

Of the Attributes of God respecting his Creatures, particularly Man, and how discoverable.

THE first Relation of God to Man is that of his Author or Creator, and this I have insisted on before, because it was the necessary Means of coming at the Knowledge of God's Existence; for till this Proposition was settled, *There is a God*, and That not being capable of rational Proof but from his Works of Creation and Providence, I was obliged to shew him to be Creator of all Things, before I could proceed in my Discourse; and that being allowed as a Principle demonstrated, I have, by a Series of Deductions from it, drawn
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the past, and shall collect the subsequent Conclusions.

PROP. I. Since God has given to Man his Being, it evidently follows, That Man is his own, and that he has an unlimited Propriety in him; for, by universal Consent, what any One has made, is his, and then nothing can give so full and compleat a Right to any Thing as Creation.

And when we say any Thing is a Man's own, we acknowledge that he has a Power to dispose of it as he pleases, as far as his Right extends; and that, and that only, is a Man's own, which he has a Power to make not his own.

But this is not so in respect of the Property of God in his Creatures, for they are entirely his own without any Restriction or Limitation; and that he cannot make them not his own, arises from his Divine Perfections, which cannot admit any Alienation of his Right.

PROP. II. As God's Right of absolute Master and Proprietor of Man immediately and necessarily results from his Creation, so from his absolute Propriety results his Right and Title to govern him, for every one has an uncontested Right or Authority to govern his own; and since God has endowed Men with Capacities to become the Subjects of Moral Government,

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to know the declared and publish'd Will of a Legislator, to discern the obligatory Force of a Law, and to be moved to Obedience by Hopes of Reward, and deter'd from Disobedience by Fears of Punishment, since, I say, God has thus made Man a Governable and an Accountable Creature, and especially since his Subjection to Government is necessary to his Well-being, It is evident, that God made Man to be ruled; otherwise those Capacities and Endowments which he has given him to fit him for Moral Government, were given in vain.

PROP. III. And as God, by being the Creator and unlimited Owner or Proprietor, has an undoubted Right to Govern, so He and He only is capable of governing the whole Race of Mankind: and from these undoubted Propositions this undeniable Inference will follow, that God, who has made Man fit to be ruled by Laws, has signified his Will that he should be so ruled; and since God has an Authority and Right to rule him, He must be the Governor of Man, and Man must be his Subject.

Thus the Right of Government, or the Moral Dominion of God over Man, his Rational Creature, and therefore capable of being a Moral Subject, is founded in his
Property,

Property, which necessarily results from his being the Maker or Creator of him.

PROP. IV. And since the Idea of a Moral Government necessarily includes that of a Legislator, it is the evident Dictate of Reason, that God rules his reasonable-Creatures by Laws and Precepts, which bind them to Obedience and constitute their Duty; for to suppose the Divine Being not to have made any Laws and Rules for the Regulation of our Thoughts, Passions, Words, and Actions, is destructive of the essential Notion of a Moral Governor, that is, to suppose a Lawgiver who makes no Laws.

PROP. V. And since no Law or Ordinance is obligatory, or capable of binding the Subject to Obedience, which is not signified and promulgated to him, (for otherwise he must be obliged to perform a Thing impossible, that is, to pay Observance to a Law which he had no Means to know, or no Lights to discover,) It is certain from this Principle of Reasoning, that the Supreme Being, the Sovereign Ruler of the World, has made and sufficiently declared his preceptive Will and Pleasure for the Regulation of our Actions; and there are but two Ways by which the Divine Being conveys the Knowledge of his Will and Pleasure to Men, that

is, either by the Dictates of the Light of Nature in the Exercise of their Reasoning Faculty, or by supernatural Revelation; For as to the Doctrine of innate Ideas of the Laws of God imprinted, stamped, engraven and written in indelible Characters on the Mind, previously to the Operation of our Intellectual Faculties, and independent on Reason and Argumentation, which Many have asserted, it is not built upon Foundations solid and strong enough to support it, but is the meer Product of Invention, and may be easily disproved. For can a Man know before he has any Knowledge? Perceive Ingenite Ideas before he has exerted one Act of Perception, and be possessed of many inbred Notions before any Operation of his Intellectual Faculties? Yet this must be supposed if these innate Images and Characters of the Laws of God are coeval with the Mind, which, according to this Hypothesis, were inherent in it at the first Moment of its Existence. But I have more at large confuted these imaginary Lights in other Writings, to which I refer the Reader, and now I undertake to shew, that Man is capable of discovering much of the preceptive Will of God without Revelation.



S E C T. II.

Of the Laws of Nature, and how discovered or published.

BEfore we come to discuss the Laws of Nature, it is necessary to observe, that the Patrons and Asserters of Impiety often use that Expression in an equivocal Sense, and mean by it nothing else but the Order and Course of Things, or the Series and Connection of Causes and Effects in the visible World; as for Instance, the regular and unaltered Motions of the Heavenly Bodies, the diurnal and annual Revolution of the Sun, the Circulation and various Appearances of the Moon, the Propension of heavy Bodies to descend, and of light to rise, the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, and the like Phænomena, are said to be the Laws of Nature, as indeed they are in a Physical Sense; that is, the Maker of all Things has made that Disposition and Connection of active Principles and passive Natures, that such a Course and Order of Events shall of Necessity be preserved. But then these false Philosophers and Pretenders to Reason declare their impious Opinion, that

that Man is governed by a necessary and resistless Impulse from External Causes, in the same Manner as Brutes and inanimate Beings are moved, and will not allow the Deity to rule his Rational Creature in as high and honourable a Way as the Civil Magistrate governs his Subjects, that is by Laws prescribed for their Actions.

It is plain by the Laws of Nature, as they regard Mankind, these Gentlemen do not mean the Precepts or Commands of God signified and directed to a Moral Agent, one capable of determining himself to Compliance or Disobedience, which is the only Sense in which I take that Expression.

I now come to define a Law of Nature which is the Will of God signified to Man, and discovered by the Light of Reason, as the Rule of his Thoughts, Passions, Words and Actions. The Matter of this Law is something enjoined or forbidden. Its *ratio Formalis*, or Generical Difference, as the Schools express themselves, is its obligatory Vertue flowing from the Legislative Authority of God, who has a Governor's Right to our Obedience.

The Divine Pleasure must be signified or declared before it becomes a Law; for no Man, as said before, is obliged to perform any Thing impossible; which he would be, were he bound by Precepts which he

he had no Means to know. The specifical Distinction of it consists in the Promulgation or Discovery of God's Will by the Faculty of Reason, by which it is distinguished from his positive Precepts, that are made known by Supernatural Revelation.

I shall now endeavour to show by what Steps and clear Inferences human Reason may trace and discern the Origine of the Laws dictated by Nature.

The Manner how the Will of the Supreme Being is communicated to the Mind, as the Rule of our Actions, or how Men by the Exercise of Right Reason, without the Assistance of Revelation, acquire the Knowledge of God's Laws, is as follows.

PROP. VI. When a Man is convinced and satisfied that the Divine Being, the only Supreme Potentate and Governor of the World, has prescribed Laws to Mankind, which are the Declarations of his Preceptive Will, that binds us to Obedience; and when he considers that God is infinitely Good and Benevolent, he must conclude, that he made his Governable Creature Man to be happy; and the immediate Dictate of Reason which results from that Conviction is, that therefore it is the preceptive Will of God that Man should not oppose this Intention of his Creator, but should still act with this End in view,
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and should therefore always do what is conducive to his own Happiness, and forbear all Things contrary and repugnant to it, or that will make him Unhappy or Miserable ; and to facilitate his Obedience to this Law or Dictate of Reason God has implanted in his Nature, and interwoven with his Constitution, a vehement Desire of the one, and a strong Aversion and Reluctance to the other ; and therefore, since he cannot but discern that it is the Will of the Divine Being that he should pursue this End, he must easily infer that it is his Duty not to destroy himself by Violence, nor to indulge Intemperance, Riot and Excess, which likewise are kinds of Self-Murder, and more of this Nature, that will be shewn in the following Pages.

PROP. VII. And thus likewise, when Man considers the Nature of God, and understands that he is Self-existent, and possessor of all Perfections of Being, Infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, he must immediately infer that it is the Will of God that Man should Acknowledge, Adore, Admire these Glorious Attributes ; and when he contemplates the Supreme Being, as his Author, Father and Benefactor, he may without Diffidence and Hesitation deduce this Proposition, that it is the Will of God, and therefore the Duty of Man to

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own him as such, and to love and praise him for his Goodness and Bounty.

I have only in this Place mention'd in these Instances, how Man may by the Exercise of Reason and Argumentation discern the Preceptive Will of God, that requires his Obedience, and shall in the following Discourse extend this Subject, and shew particularly and fully how Men may by the Light of Nature discover the Will or Law of God in what relates to God himself and to Man, either in a private or social Capacity.

Of the Origine of Moral Good and Evil.

ALL Moral Good and Evil result from the Conformity or Opposition that our Actions bear to the declared Will or Law of God ; nor is it possible it should arise from any other Spring. The Notion of intrinsick Good or Evil, exclusive of, or abstracted from the Ideas of Obedience and Disobedience, or the Conformity or Disagreement of our Manners to Divine Precepts, is so far from being built upon any solid Foundations, that it is merely Precarious and Imaginary : For if there is no Law, that by injoyning or forbidding

this Thing or That, constitutes our Duty, and so binds us by Legal Authority to do or forbear any Action, it is very evident there can be no Obedience or Disobedience; and if no Obedience or Disobedience, then no Virtue and no Guilt; and if so, no Moral Good or Evil: For can there be any Deviation, where there is no Rule to deviate from? any Transgression, without a Law transgressed? any Moral Offence, without any Governor offended? any Obliquity or Error, without a Standard, Line or Precept that directs and marks out our Way? It is manifest as Noon-day, that Obedience and Disobedience essentially involve the Idea of something obeyed and disobeyed, enjoined or forbidden, and therefore inherent Good and Evil abstracting from Divine Laws is to me a chimerical and inexplicable Doctrine, while it makes a Relative subsist without a Correlate, and is the same thing as to make a Likeness in a Thing without another Object to answer it in Likeness, or to make a Comparison in one Idea without respect to any other, which is to insult common Sense, and offer the greatest Violence to Human Understanding. The Foundation then of Good and Evil in a Moral Sense, as said before, is the preceptive and prohibiting Will of God revealed,

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promulgated, or made known to Men by the Natural Light of Reason.

It is true, that many of our Actions have Physical Good and Evil in them; as Incontinence and Excess in Meats and Drinks destroy the Health of Men, and consume their Substance, and bring an unhappy Family to Want and Misery; but as the intemperate Person by wasting his whole Estate offends not against the Municipal Laws of his Country, which have made no Provision against it, so if it could be made appear that he transgressed no Divine Law of Nature, I don't see how he could be charged with Guilt or Disobedience: but if it be considered that it is the Will of the Supreme Governor, discoverable by the Light of Nature, that all Men should endeavour to promote their own Health and Welfare, and the Good and Happiness of their Families and Posterity, this will sufficiently make it known, that it is a Divine Precept that Men should follow the Rules of Sobriety and Temperance.

Nor can the Rise and Origine of Moral Good and Evil be derived from an Assent to any Set of true Propositions, according to the Scheme laid down by a late Writer in his Delineation of the Religion of Nature; who makes Moral Good and Evil result from

from the Agreement of our Conceptions with some certain Principles or Assertions, for that in the Schools of Learning is called Physical Truth, not Moral: Moral Truth springs from an Agreement between our Thoughts and Words, or our inward Conceptions with the outward Expressions of them; and thus we say a Person is True, Sincere, and a Man of Veracity, when he is consistent with himself and speaks what he thinks, tho' his Sentiments should not bear a Conformity to the Objects he conceives: and that Author misapplies the Idea of Physical Truth, when he assigns it as the Origine of Moral Goodness or Turpitude, since it is apparent that he confounds the Ideas of *Verum & Bonum Morale*; for tho' all Truth is Good, and all Good is true, in the Metaphysical Sense of Goodness, that is, it is Real, Sincere, and not Fictitious or a Non-entity, yet this is a different Idea from that of Moral Good or Evil, for these evidently proceed from a different Fountain, that is, from the Conformity or want of Conformity of our Thoughts, Words, and Actions to Divine Laws and Rules which regulate them, and is discernable by the Light of Nature: for Moral Good and Evil, as the very Word Moral implies, must consist in the Rectitude or Obliquity of our Manners in re-

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spect of the Rule that directs them, which I have before sufficiently demonstrated.

Thus I have endeavoured to shew the Error of that learned Gentleman in assigning the Origine of Moral Good and Evil; nor can the Apparatus of all the Capital Letters of the Alphabet ranged in Geometrical Array, and in appearance charged with Scientifick Evidence, be able to bring him off and cure so great a Flaw in his Mathematical System of Natural Theology.

The Academick and Stoick Philosophers of Greece and Rome, especially *Plato, Seneca, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus*, &c. have expressed in their Writings many commendable and worthy Notions of Morality, and have laid down many valuable Rules for the Government and Regulation of Human Actions, but in This they are unhappily defective, that they have not told us how these Rules and Precepts came by any Authority to bind us to Obedience, and in what their obligatory Virtue consists, which makes it our Duty to observe them. Now 'tis in vain to tell Men, that they ought to perform such Deeds, and to forbear others, if they cannot or will not let them know what Obligations they are under from the Laws and Authority of any Governor to act according to their Precepts; for still I in-

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sist, that where no Law is broken there can be no Disobedience, nor can any Guilt be contracted but from the Violation of some binding Precept.

They tell us a Man should act according to the Dignity of his Nature, and as becomes a Being endowed with Intellectual Faculties, Liberty of Choice and a Reasoning Power, that he should purge his Soul from all Impurities, moderate or extinguish his Passions, and make himself Divine and Happy by so doing, for Virtue, they say, makes Men Terrestrial Gods. These, 'tis true, are fine Words, and it must be owned they sound great, but when examined they vanish in Air. As to our acting according to the Dignity of Human Nature, suppose I have a Mind to act contrary to it, what then? You will say I have done wrong and committed Evil: But how does that appear? What governing Authority have I contradicted? What, and whose Laws have I broken? Or can I become guilty and contract any Moral Turpitude without transgressing any Law that enjoins the contrary? And therefore these Philosophers, by not shewing any binding Virtue in their Precepts, tho' those Precepts as to their Matter may be Good, yet are they Lifeless and Unoperative, while they are not informed and animated by the Infusion of any obligatory

Force. And since the Pagan Moralists have not shewn how the Divine Being has by his Legal Authority and declared Will laid Men under an Obligation to act in Conformity to their Precepts, they have left Men at Liberty to act as they please, without contracting any Guilt; for where no Divine Law intervenes to restrain and limit us, we are at perfect Freedom to do whatsoever our Worldly Interests, Passions and Inclinations shall lead us to; and therefore those ancient Sages having not taught their Disciples how they are restrained in respect of their Manners by Divine Laws, they have left Men in an unconfined Liberty of doing what they think fit; for a Grave Sentence or Moral Precept of a Philosopher is no Law, nor is it propounded with binding Authority: nor is the Excellence or Dignity of our Nature our Legislator or Ruler, tho' it makes us fit for Moral Government, and may by the Exercise of our Reason upon it point out to us who is our Governor, and what his Laws are.

To encourage their Disciples and engage them in the Practice of Virtue in General, tho' they do not tell them what Virtue is, They assure them, as I have said, it will make them like the Gods; but what will they get by that Likeness? Will it be a
Proof

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Proof or Argument of the Excellence, Perfection and Dignity of Human Nature, or a just Mark or convincing Evidence of a pure, refined and exalted Mind to resemble the Gods whom they worshipped? What, such impure, flagitious, unhallowed Beings, plunged in the Dregs of Vice and Immorality, not excepting their Supreme God himself, who was as much superior to the rest in Lewdness, as he was in Dignity? Would it be any Honour to a Man to resemble Gods of such a vile Character, who sometimes by their ridiculous, and sometimes their wicked and detestable Practices, were become the Scandal of Heaven, the Reproach of Religion, and the standing Jest of facetious Libertines, such as *Lucian* and his merry Friends.

Besides, they promised that the Perfection of Virtue would not only make them like the Gods, but by the Practice of it they would at last, as I have said, become Terrestrial Gods themselves; for their wise Men were dignified with the high Title of Divinities on Earth, while other Mortals continued meer Men. How they made their Promise good I cannot tell; not by conferring upon them Immortality, their chief distinguishing Character of a God, for they all died and were buried: But if they became Gods on Earth by being

ing endowed with the Divine Qualities of the Celestial Deities, then these Terrestrial Gods, who they say were their wise Men, were not much complimented by that Character, for by resembling those Deities they would become the vilest and most detestable Beings.

They are likewise as unreasonable and absurd, in bidding a Man purge his Mind from all Impurities, subdue his Passions and make himself happy, while they tell him not what the Impurities of the Mind are, in what they consist, and whence they derived their evil Nature, nor furnish Men with sufficient Aid and Assistance to cleanse the Heart from these Impurities: And as to their bidding a Man make himself easy and happy, it is enjoyning him an impracticable Task; it would be as proper to bid a diseased Man make himself sound and well. They might know, it is true, something of their Duty, by the Remains of Conscience not entirely stifled, and the glimmering Leavings of the Light of Nature not quite extinguished; but they have not left an entire Scheme or Systeme of Morals, nor are their Precepts the Rules of one, but of many different Sages, sometimes disagreeing with one another; and since those Moralists did not pretend to any Legislative Power that bound their Disciples

Disciples to obey their Rules, nor attempted to shew that their Precepts received a binding Force from the Will of God declared by natural Light; it is evident that these Philosophers came far short of accounting for the genuine Source of Good and Evil, which can only be deduced from the Conformity of our Actions to, or their Disagreement with the Laws of the Supreme Being.

Of the Laws of Nature, and how deducible from their proper Fountain.

I HAVE had occasion to touch upon this Article before, and have hinted how the Divine Will concerning our Actions may be discovered by the due Exercise of Reason without the supernatural Light of Revelation, but I come now, in one or two Instances, to discourse on this Subject expressly, more fully, and in a clearer Method.

PROP. I. Man, as an Intelligent Being, has the Power of perceiving the Truth of a first or self-evident Principle; to calculate, compare, and by inferring one Proposition from another to form a coherent Train of Conclusions. By vertue of this Faculty he can contemplate God as a Causeless,

Causeless, Independent Mind, and therefore All-sufficient in himself, and as Author of all Beings in the Universe, which he Created out of Nothing; and then by virtue of this self-evident Maxim, That Nothing can give to another what it has not in it self to give, he may easily infer, that all the Goodness, Energy, Life and Intelligence communicated to his Creatures must be found in an eminent Way collected in this Uncreated Self-existent Mind; who must therefore be possess of all possible Perfection, and if so, he must be a God of Truth, and if a God of Truth, it must be his Will that Man should not form any false Conceptions of his Divine Nature: And hence the first Law of Nature deducible by Reason is, that Man should believe the Existence of God, and should entertain the most honourable and sublime Idea of him that his Intelligent Faculty can possibly conceive: That he should acknowledge and extol his Divine Attributes, and revere his Supreme Dignity and Incomprehensible Excellence: That he should own, magnify and adore his Ineffable Glory and Infinite Majesty, contemplate with Admiration and Rapture his boundless Perfections, bow down his Soul in low Submission to his Sovereign Greatness, praise and exalt with the most ardent

ardent Strains of Devotion his All-sufficiency and Independent Self-existence: That he should stand in awe of his dreadful and irresistible Power, express the highest Love of his Essential Goodness, constantly observe and regard with Veneration his Presence in all Places, and attentively advert to his unlimited Knowledge, who not only takes notice of all our Actions, but searches the Secrets of the Heart, views the Bent and Inclination of the Soul, and sees our Thoughts and Purposes even at their first Ebullition and imperfect Eruption from the Mind.

PROP. II. Since, as before demonstrated, the Divine Being is endowed with all possible Perfection, he must be acknowledged as most Pure and Holy, and free from all Blemish and Defect: Now the Idea of Holiness includes all the Beauty, Rectitude and Harmony of the Soul, and is exclusive of all Moral Turpitude. To be Pure and Holy is to be Spotless, Unpolluted and Undeiled, and this consists in a full Conformity to the eternal Ideas in the Divine Mind of Justice, Righteousness and Moral Goodness. To speak, as some learned Men do, of a Conformity of our Actions to any other Eternal Ideas of Justice, Truth and other Virtues, besides those

those in the Divine Mind, is to imagine something very absurd ; for in what Mind should those Notions or Ideas subsist ? Not in the Minds of Angels or Men, for they are not Eternal, but Created Beings ; and to suppose Eternal Propositions, Truths, Exemplars or Ideas existing out of the Divine Mind, before any Intelligent Creatures were made that could conceive them, is to suppose them capable of existing in the Air, to hover and float in imaginary Space as so many Dreams and empty Phantasms.

PROP. III. And since it is evident by Natural Reason that the Supreme Being, Maker of Heaven and Earth, is perfectly Pure and Holy, it is clear that it is his Will that his Intelligent Creature Man should be likewise Pure and Holy, and should imitate his Creator in all his imitable Perfections, and to esteem it the Dignity, Excellence and Felicity of his Nature thus to bear the Image of the most excellent Being, and to look upon himself as Deformed, Odious, Impure and Miserable, so far as his Nature recedes from a Similitude to the Divine Perfections, or becomes Ungodlike ; for so far he is a declared Enemy to the Divine Governor of the World, a Rebel against his Laws, an Opposer of the
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the End of his own Being, and a detestable Blot and Blemish of the Creation.

It is such an uncontested Dictate of Reason, that it is the Dignity of Human Nature to imitate God's Moral Perfections, that many Ancient Sages of the Pagans made Virtue to consist in that Imitation, and declared that All should strive to become like the Deities: besides they assured Men that by so doing they themselves would arrive at the Honour of being Gods on Earth, as said above: But tho' this may be affirmed of a few Philosophers, they do not however name the Gods that we ought to imitate. If it were the Gods then worshipped, the Imitation of them, as said before, would debase the Dignity of Human Nature instead of raising it, and sink it down into the Depths of Wickedness and Pollution, there being no Intelligent Creature more profligate, abandoned and abominable than their Supreme Deity. It is strange they should think that consummate Virtue should arise from following the highest Examples of Vice and Moral Turpitude. Whatever more just and refined Notions of the Supreme God some of those Moralists had, which however they have but obscurely imparted to others, while they gave into the Worship of the Gods received and established by

the Laws of their Cities, yet the Civil Magistrates, with the People in general, had no better Sentiments of them than I have expressed, for their Divine Worship consisted in the most wicked Rites and detestable Pollutions, and that from Principles of Religion: And it is very observable that it seems they had no opinion that Virtue entered into the Character of the Gods; for when they Deify'd any Men, as they did many, it was never done in respect of their Moral Goodness, Piety or Virtue, but for their Valour, their Invention of sowing Corn, planting the Vine, curing Diseases, or delivering their Country from Plagues and Monsters. And therefore those Philosophers, who taught that Virtue made Men like the Gods, must either have no right Notion of it, or else they spoke of the Gods, as they ought to have been, and not such as they really were in the Opinion of their Worshippers, who seem to have left out of the Idea of a Deity all Perfections, besides those of Power, the Knowledge of future Events, and Immortality.

PROP. IV. And when a Man reflects on the Immensity of God, who fills all Places, and therefore must be constantly present with him, and that he is so present, as to keep up his Being, and preserve him
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from relapsing into Non-existence; that he is more necessary to his Life and Motions, than the Soul that animates and informs his Body, it will be a ready Inference that Man ought to acknowledge and pay a reverential Regard to the Divine Presence; and it will further appear to be his Duty to do so upon this Consideration, that it is an efficacious Means to promote his Obedience to the Divine Laws, by exciting his Awe and Vigilance, and deterring him from Disobedience: For while he reflects that in God he Lives, and Moves, and has his Being, that he enters into the minutest and darkest Recesses of his Soul, that he constantly surrounds him, looks continually upon him, and accurately observes all his Ways, will he not be afraid of Sinning in the Face of a just, pure and impartial Judge? would he be hardy enough to perpetrate any criminal Action, which he has not Courage enough to commit in the Presence of a Mortal Man, or even of a Child?

Were the Heavens opened and displayed before him, that he might see the Manifestations of God's Ineffable Greatness and Majesty, and behold him enthroned above the highest Heavens, attended with ten thousand times ten thousand Celestial Angels, would he not at that time for-

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bear any thing that might provoke and offend him? And is not the Supreme Being always as certainly with him and before him, as if he saw the Glorious Marks of his Presence with his Corporal Eyes?

And as the constant Attention to the Divine Presence, in which we ever stand, must be a great and prevalent Motive not to offend him by doing Evil, but an Encouragement to conform our Lives to the Rules and Laws he has revealed by Natural Light and the Exercise of Impartial Reason, so it is a stable ground of our Hopes, Trust and Confidence in him in all our Streights and Tryals, in all the Calamities we feel, and all the Dangers that we fear; for as he is able by his Power, and willing from his gracious Nature, to succour, support and defend his sincere Servants, to interpose his saving Hand, and extricate them out of Snares and Difficulties, so being Omnipresent, he is always ready at hand to observe their Distresses, and help them in their Extremities and the time of Need: And thus from this Principle of God's Ubiquity, it is an evident Inference That, as God is always present with us, so by a stedfast Faith we should always be present with him; that
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is, by an actual Attention and Regard paid him, or a constant Disposition to it.

PROP. V. And since God is a Self-existent, Incorporeal, or Spiritual Mind, we may easily collect by the Exercise of Reason that we ought not to make any Corporeal Image or Figure of Him, or worship Him under any such Representation; for this is a false and lying Similitude of the Deity; and a Corporeal Idea of God are Terms that confound and destroy each other; whence it is clear, that Divine Worship paid to Idols or Images must be an Abomination to God, and the greatest Object of his Hatred, inasmuch as it not only forms in the Mind the most unworthy, absurd and dishonourable Conceptions of God, but even subverts his Nature and Essence.

And from the Spiritual and Immaterial Nature of God we may deduce our Duty to exclude from the Idea which we conceive of him, all Material and Sensible Qualities; for since our first Ideas are transmitted to the Mind by the Ministration of our Senses, tho' afterwards by Reflection and Reasoning upon them we acquire abstracted and intellectual Images, and during the first Stages of Life we are accustomed to receive our Notions by this Conveyance through our Corporeal Organs, we are always prone in our Conceptions of God to

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minge something of a material humane Figure; It is therefore highly reasonable we should be very vigilant and careful to reject all such Mixtures and false Representations of the Divine Being in our Thoughts and Contemplations of him, which are incongruous and disagreeable to his Perfections. It is certain we conceive the truest Image of God from the Contemplation of our own Minds, on which he has made the Impressions of his active Power, Wisdom and Goodness; and while we consider that our Souls are Incorporeal, Intelligent, conscious and free Agents, we justly conclude, that God has most eminently those Perfections in himself; and since he is an Infinite, Uncircumscribed, and a most Pure and Spiritual Being, the Worship we pay him should in Congruity to its Object be likewise Spiritual; and therefore that Worship of God which we express by Internal Devotion of the Mind, that is, the most ardent Strains of Love, Praise and Gratitude, profound Reverence and Admiration, exalted Joy and Delight in him, fervent Prayer that comes from a pious, contrite Heart, Trust and Confidence in his Mercy and Goodness, and a ready Resignation of our own to his Will and Pleasure, is the true Worship that is acceptable to him; and without this, the costly Pomp and Theatrical

atrical Decorations of Domes and Temples, long Processions, magnificent Robes of Gold and Silver, ravishing Musick, admirable Painting, and endless Rites and Ceremonies, are no more than insignificant Pageantry, and make, if Reason be the Judge, but a low, inept and puerile Religion; a Religion not accommodated to a Pure, Immaterial Spirit, and therefore unworthy of God, and consequently an Abomination to him, if unaccompanied with the Spiritual and Divine Disposition of the Heart before described.

We should likewise, by the Consideration of the Divine unlimited Presence, be deterred from doing Evil, and excited and encouraged to live a pious, obedient Life, to dwell in the Contemplation of his glorious Attributes and infinite Perfections, in the Fruition of his Goodness, a patient Submission to his Corrections, and a ready Acquiescence in all the Dispensations of his Providence.



Of the Laws of Nature which respect our selves, either as separate Individuals or united in Families or Civil Societies.

Of those Laws that respect a private Individual, and how deducible by the Operation of Reason.

WHEN a Man reflects that God the Author of his Being gave him his Life, he may rightly conclude, that it is his Will and Pleasure that each Individual should preserve and uphold it, and use all proper Means for that purpose; which will more fully appear, when it is considered, that the Author of our Being has interwoven in our Constitution a strong Principle of Self-Preservation, and a mighty Abhorrence of Death or Annihilation, that we may not be induced upon every petty Discontent or peevish Passion wilfully to go out of Being to remove our Uneasiness; and this Desire of avoiding Dissolution is so prevalent, that all that a Man has will he give for his Life, in which however he has but a subordinate and dependent Propriety, and therefore has no Right to dispose of it at his own Pleasure.

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The Individuals then of Mankind are obliged by the Laws of Nature to avoid all Sorts of Self-murder, either to put an End to their Sufferings or prevent their Shame by falling into the Hands of a conquering Enemy, who may lead them in publick Triumph or otherwise expose them to Scorn and Derision, or condemn them to ignominious Labour in the Mine or the Gally. And as the direct and violent Self-murderer is a manifest Transgressor of the Law of Nature, so are all those that put themselves to Death by indirect Means and by slow Degrees, I mean the Intemperate and Voluptuous, who live in daily Riot, and indulge themselves in immoderate eating and drinking : For while a continued Course of luxurious Dishes, and generous Wines, or strong distilled Liquors, enfeeble the Stomach, subvert the Appetite, deprave the Humours and ruin the digestive Faculty, whence unconcocted Leavings and crude Impurities not only vitiate and oppress the Blood, and inflame the Spirits, but likewise obstruct the Bowels and fill the Body with the noxious Seeds of acute as well as slow Diseases, it at length becomes as fatal as the most destructive Weapons, and the Glutton and the Drunkard are no less their own Executioners, than they that to end their Lives employ

the Ponyard or the Pistol. And notwithstanding this violent Manner of Self-destruction seems more frightful and tragical than the other, that is effected by voluptuous Meats and delightful Draughts of Poison, by which in the Comparifon it feems at firft Sight to have the Advantage, yet when we confider that the Self-murderer who dies by the Rope or the Dagger dies but once, and in a fhort Time, while the others, who expire by the Stone, Gout, Jaundice, &c. introduced by long Intemperance, die a hundred Times by repeated Agonies and Paroxyfms of Pain, and are many Years the miferable Spectacles of protracted Cruelty and a lingering managed Death; If this, I fay, be confidered, as the flow Sort of Execution by Riot and Excefs is not lefs fatal, fo it is more painful and tormenting than that which is owing to voluntary Violence. But more of this in the following Chapter.

On the other hand, thofe who by continued indefatigable Labour, by intemperate Abftinence or other Excefles fhall emaciate and confume their Bodies, enfeeble their Limbs, and exhaust and difsipate their Spirits, 'till they run into fome fatal Difafe, are guilty of the Sin of Self-murder; and fo are they that neglect the neceffary Means
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of preserving their Lives, either by Food, Medicine or manual Operation.

It is likewise an evident Law of Nature, that every Individual should employ his Time, which is nothing else but the Duration of Life, or prolonged Existence, in such Ways as will promote the Honour and Service of the Author of his Being, and his own Felicity, which conjunctly, tho' not equally, are the great and ultimate End of his Creation.

Since God has made Man a reasonable Creature, and has dignified and ennobled his Nature with Powers and Capacities to know, adore, admire, and love his blest Creator, he has plainly proclaimed and declared his Will, that Men should employ a Part of their Time in his solemn Worship, Invocation, Praises, and Doxologies, and that the rest should be expended in procuring what will tend to his Preservation and Well-being. Man has indeed so strong a Propension to Happiness, that it is inseparable from his Nature, and it is easy to see the Divine Pleasure that he should follow that natural Instinct, and constantly endeavour the Promotion of his own Felicity. There is nothing more absurd and shocking to Reason, more repugnant to the Light of Nature, or more incongruous or inconsistent with the just and genuine

genuine Idea of the Divine Being, than to imagine that by his creative Power he should bring a Man into Being, and endow him with noble Intellectual, as well as Sensitive Faculties, for no other End but to make him capable of Pain and Torment, and to glorify himself by that miserable Creature's everlasting Destruction, without respect had to his Disobedience and Rejection of proffered Mercy. There is no doubt but a God of Essential Love and Goodness created Man to make him happy, and that he enjoyns him to use all proper Means to procure that End; whenever then Man has found out what is good for him, and promotes his Welfare, he is obliged to pursue it: and in this Sense the Doctrine of the Schools, that Moral Good is founded in Physical, or that Moral Duty takes its Rise from Convenience, is not to be condemned: for when a Man discerns that any thing is good and useful to him, he for that Reason may conclude that it is the preceptive Will of God that he should endeavour to attain it, and thus what was his Interest before becomes now his Duty.

This is so clear a Dictate of Nature that some have thought that this Proposition, A Man ought to do what is best for himself, or most conducive to his Preservation and Well-being, is an indemonstrable and self-

Self-evident Principle, whence subsequent Moral Conclusions are deducible. But by what I have said it is plain that it can be demonstrated, that Man lyes under a Moral Obligation to pursue his Welfare and Happiness in Conformity to the Divine Will, which requires it from him; so that here his Duty and Native Propension to Felicity, his Interest and Obedience are strictly Complicated and Coincident.

It will hence follow, that Man is obliged, for the Promotion of his own Happiness, to employ his Time and exert his best Endeavours in providing Things necessary and convenient for his Body, as likewise in Adorning and Enriching his Mind with all useful Endowments, Intellectual Accomplishments and Skill in Arts and Sciences, particularly in the Knowledge of the Works of Creation and Providence, and especially by the Exercise of his Reason in discovering as much of God's Preceptive Will as concerns his Duty, and just Encouragement and Motives to Obedience: He should study the Laws of Nature with Diligence, and by contemplative Employment of his Reason improve and exalt the Rudiments of Unrevealed Religion, and refine the Dictates of remaining Conscience: For it is certain, if Men without Prejudice and Prepossession would with due

due Application and free Exercise of their Rational Faculties search after the Will of God, which constitutes their Duty, they might greatly enlarge their Views of many Articles of Belief and Practice, unassisted by Supernatural Revelation; strengthen their Intellectual Sight, and propagate their Knowledge of unwritten Divinity beyond all the Attainments of Ancient Sages, who were lamentably Lame and Deficient in forming the Statute Book of Nature, and collecting and digesting the Codes and Pandects of her Precepts.

The visible Insufficiency of those Sages for such a Work was owing to the Mists and Fogs introduced by the Disobedience of our first Parents, that hovering round our Minds, cloud and obstruct their Sight, and greatly disable the Operation of their Intellectual Powers; were these Fogs and Mists dispell'd from the Minds of Men, as by deep Contemplation and Study, but more especially by Purity of Heart and Life, they might in a great measure be, Men would without difficulty discern the Obligation they are under to pay Obedience to the Laws and Rules of Practice dictated by Reason, thus delivered from the Hindrances before named; and as they would then discern the Laws of Nature, and their Duty to Obey, so they would be

be convinced, as I confidently believe, that their constant Application to discharge those Obligations would be the most proper and effectual Means to promote their own Peace and Felicity.

And consequently as they would be convinced that the cheerful and uninterrupted Practice of Virtue is their Principal Interest, so they would be obliged to aim at the Acquisition of the highest Degree of it; for if Virtue and Purity are Good and Amiable in themselves, and conducive to our Happiness, then in their most perfect State they must be most desirable, as best for us, according to the Scholastick Maxim, *a quatenus ad omne & ad gradum valet Consequentia*. Whence if Virtue in its own Nature and as Such be Good, and likewise most Beneficial and Good to Man, then, since Man is obliged to do whatsoever is best for himself, and makes him most happy, it is plain that it is his Duty to strive and press forward on towards the greatest Moral Goodness he is capable of attaining; he is therefore obliged not only to do Good, but to do the greatest Good he is able, not only to pass his Time in an inoffensive and innocent Manner, as the Supine and Indolent call it, but to exert all his Powers and Faculties in good Actions, and to aim at acquiring
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consummate Heroick Virtue, otherwise he cannot be esteemed a sincere Lover either of Virtue or himself; for whoever desires to be Happy must certainly think it desirable to be perfectly so: And if Virtue be the Means to make him Happy, he must for that Reason look upon the highest Degree of it to be most Amiable and Good for him; and if so, that he is bound to use his utmost Endeavours to procure it.

Hence it is evident that his whole Life ought to be employ'd in pursuing this End by a Course and Series of Good Deeds, either in Acts of Divine Worship and Devotion, the necessary Business of his Calling, or the Repairing his Strength by temperate Eating and convenient Sleep.

And if Men of higher Condition, who enjoy Plenty, and an Affluence of the Good Things of this World, are exempt from Mechanick Labour, and the Business of Commerce, or Trade, or a liberal Profession, they are however by the Law of Nature, as before explained, obliged to employ all Parts of their Time in a Succession of Duties, which all contribute to the great End before mentioned. Hence it will appear, that whether a Man be engag'd in Duties of Religion, in Study or Business, in Labour or Recreation, or in

in Eating and Drinking, he is obliged to dispose of every Part of his Time in Obedience to God, and to intend and direct all his Actions in the first Place to the Promotion of the Divine Honour, and in the second, to his own Felicity; so that whether he is Toiling or Feasting, employ'd in his Calling, or refreshing his Body or Mind with needful Diversion, every Action of Life, as well the Gay as the Grave, the Relaxation as well as the closest Application of the Mind, the most unactive Vacancies, as well as the most solemn and serious Parts of Life, should not only be Innocent, but Holy and Pure, by their arising from a Principle of Divine Love and Obedience, and ultimately designed for the Advancement of our last conjunct End, chiefly the Glory of the Supreme Being our Author, and next of our own Happiness.

For it is a great Mistake to think that we are only serving God while we are engaged in Publick or Private Works of Religion, or in the diligent Discharge of the Duties of our Calling; for our necessary Repasts and Refreshments by Meat and Drink, and proper Cessations of industrious Labour of Body or Mind requisite for the Support of Life, and the Restoring of our exhausted Strength and
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weary Spirits, are as really Acts of Piety, tho' not so exalted to the first Class, with those that more immediately respect the Service of God, when they spring from a good Fountain, a right Intention, and are directed to a right End ; for then if a Man feeds himself, it is no less a Work of Religion, than if he fed the Poor ; the taking Care of and providing for himself and his own Family, is no less an Act of Righteousness and holy Obedience, than to relieve the Hungry, cloath the Naked, heal the Sick, and vindicate the Cause of the Widow and Fatherless : For if the Design and Intention of the Agent, whence the specifical Nature of a Moral Action proceeds, be the same in these various Actions, then supposing the Matter of the Action to be good, all his lowest Operations are really Pure and Sacred, tho' not in so eminent a degree, as his Fasting and Praying, and the most solemn Acts of Sanctity and Devotion, which are therefore more excellent and important, as employ'd about the most excellent and important Objects. And therefore the same pious Principle and End going thro' the whole Course of his Life, and equally animating all the Series of his Actions with an uniform Spirit of Religion, the Saint, that is, the pious and good Christian, is truly
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such at the Change, and at the Church; in Buying and Selling, or following the Business of his Profession, as when upon his Knees in publick or private Worship. Nor is he unacceptable to God, or disapproved or censured by his own Conscience, when he is at a Consort of Musick and not singing Psalms, and when he partakes of a rich Banquet, and does not fast as on a Day of Humiliation. Things become Good or Evil by their Circumstances, and to do even a less Good, when at that time a greater might be done, is to do Evil. It is certain that every Action of a Man's Life, who is a rational Agent and acts with a View of some determinate End, is receptive of Moral Goodness; and if it springs from a right Principle, and is directed to a right End, and the Matter of it is not forbidden, it must be, as I have said, Holy and Righteous; and if it does not, it is evidently a Moral Error, or a Transgression of the Law of Nature, which obliges all Men in all their Actions, as much as possible, to seek their own Happiness subordinately to the Glory of the Author of their Being, to whom they are accountable Creatures: and therefore a cheerful and uniform Spirit of Love and Obedience ought to run thro' all their Do-

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ings with an uninterrupted Succession ; for if in all the Train of their Actions any might be excused from coming from a good Spring, or being directed to a right End, whence their Goodness arises, then by Parity of Reason all might in like manner be exempted, and so the Law of Nature would be entirely abolished, tho' erected and established upon the demonstrative and scientifick Principles before laid down.

It is plain then that the Obligation of the Law of Nature affects every the minutest Portions of Life, Rest as well as Labour, Refreshments as well as Contemplation and Study ; and thus it manifestly appears by the Light of right Reason that every Part of our Time ought to be devoted and consecrated to the Honour of our Creator, and expended in Obedience to his Preceptive Will, whence all our Actions and Cessations to act, those of the least Moment and Significancy, as well as those of the greatest Importance and Necessity, become Morally Good, Pure and Religious, as before explained. As there is no need that when a Man has calculated his Income or Revenue he should deliberate what Portion of his Estate he should allot to God, that is to the Poor, or Divine Uses, when he is under
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under an indispensable Obligation to consecrate the whole to him, and that part of his Estate which is expended in providing Necessaries and Conveniences of Food and Raiment, and requisite Recreations for himself and his Family, is no less dedicated to and laid out upon a Religious and Divine Account, than that which he appropriates to the Relief of the Poor, or the Education of indigent Children, to the endowing of a College or an Hospital, or the Building of a House of Prayer: In like manner, a Man's whole Time, which is not his own, but his Maker's, ought, as Reason dictates when rightly exercised, to be expended in promoting his principal and ultimate End, the Honour of the Divine Being and his own Felicity; and whatever Part of it is diverted or alienated from this End is an Embezzlement of Life, and as truly a robbing of God, as a sacrilegious rifling of a Temple.





S E C T. III.

THUS I have enumerated the Duties that Man owes to the Divine Being, resulting from the Contemplation of his Nature and Attributes, either absolute or relative: I come now to consider the Laws of Nature binding Man to Obedience as they respect himself, either as a single, private Person, or a Member of a Family or a Civil Society.

From the undisputed Canon, that every Man is obliged by the Precepts of Natural Religion to seek his own Felicity and Perfection, and to do what is best for himself, it will follow undeniably, that he is bound to provide and take Care for the Preservation of his Person, the Health of his Body, and the Peace and Tranquility of his Mind, by all proper and warrantable Means; as likewise to avoid all Things that occasion or introduce Pain, Sickness, and Diseases, or disturb or interrupt the Satisfaction and Quiet of the Breast, and fill it with Discontent, Terrour, or Remorse. That he is therefore obliged to be laborious and diligent, as well to procure Food and Raiment for the Body, as to promote and main-

maintain it in Health, while by the constant Exercise of his Limbs he acquires salutary Hunger, assists and strengthens the concoctive Faculty of the Stomach, and preserves the regular Circulation of the Blood.

And for the same Reason all Men are bound to follow the strict Rules of Temperance in Eating and Drinking, as well as Sleep, Rest, and Recreations, which shall hereafter be discoursed upon; all which much contribute to a Constitution, and the Defence of the Body, from the Invasion of many fatal Distempers: And since the preceptive Dictate of Nature enjoins every Man to save and defend his own Life, and guard against all Things that may injure or destroy it, every one is obliged to observe that Measure of Temperance and Sobriety which conduces to that End, and he who transgresses to a great Degree those regular Bounds in Eating and Drinking, acts, as I have shewn before, with Outrage and Violence against his own Life, and is no less than a Self-assassin, or *felo de se*, while his immoderate Cups are in effect sure Draughts of Poison, and the Knife employed on his Plate, is no less fatal, than if put to his Throat.

And as a continued Course of Luxury and Excess is destructive of Health and

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Vigour, by filling the Veins with impure and noxious Humours, they are no less prejudicial to the Operations of the Mind, while Heaps of crude and undigested Meats and Drinks oppress the Spirits in the Stomach, and Clouds of Vapours and dull unconcocted Fumes ascending thence, involve the Brain, eclipse the Imagination, and introduce a heavy and drowsy Disposition on all the Intellectual Faculties: Hence the Soul, its native Activity and sprightly Vigour being clogged and suspended, grows torpid and sluggish, incapable of Reflection, and disqualified for the generous and exalted Operations, for the Sake of which it was endowed and ennobled by such admirable Powers and Capacities. Thus the Intemperate Person, by a Course of Riot and Excess, perverts the Use of the proper Means appointed to repair his weary Body, supply his Mind with new Life and Alacrity, and so fit them both to discharge their natural Functions, and employs them to an opposite and repugnant End, by making them injurious both to Body and Mind, whence it is evident that he acts directly contrary to the Will of his Divine Author displayed by the Light of Nature.

An idle, indolent and supine Life, wasted in the unsupportable Toil of doing nothing,

thing, or a constant Succession of inactive Recreations, is a Vice of the same Class, as it is prejudicial to Health, and so productive of many and great Diseases, that it is more destructive than the Pestilence, and kills more than the Sword, while the sluggish and unagitated Blood, like stagnant Water or unventilated Air, abounds with the Seeds of Putrefaction, and secret Hoards of Contagion and Death. Besides, this Sort of sauntering and lazy Human Animals, that, dissolved in Luxury and effeminate Manners, abhor Business and the wholesome Duties of active Life, and by wasting all their valuable Hours in Pastime and Idleness, and living to no Purpose, become a Sort of unburied, walking Dead, and differ only in this from their Brethren in the Tomb, that they breathe and move, and contract heinous Guilt, while they make the Employment of Life one continued Scene of Sloth.

And those Men yet more properly imitate the indolent Inhabitants of the Grave, that with the Sluggard are always folding their Arms to Rest, and reposed on their Couch, or their Bed, sleep away a great Part of an insignificant Existence; for by their immoderate Indulgence of themselves in Sleep, they dull their rational Faculties, benumb their Senses, stupefy their Fancy,

and bring such a lethargick Disposition upon their Spirits, as unfits them for Intellectual and Animal Functions, whence they pass their Time in unreflecting Oiscitance and drowsy Inactivity; and while all Creatures about them are employed in promoting the End of their Creation, and advancing the Glory of their Divine Author, they snore and sleep on, or else when waking stand still and gaze on the other Parts of the World, which in beautiful Order and delightful Harmony are compleating their appointed Tasks, and acting in Conformity to the Principles and Ends of their Being. Such a restive and motionless Creature is too great a Part of his Life either interred in his Bed, as really as those that sleep in their Sepulchres, or when he rises from it consumes his Hours in Indolence, or sensual Pleasure, which is to destroy all the Usefulness of Life, and is much worse than to lie idle and slumbering in the Grave.

It is true that since our Limbs are often weakened and enervated by Labour, and our Spirits exhausted by their constant Agitation, arising from the Cares and Thoughtfulness of the Mind, Nature has provided the Returns of moderate Sleep to recruit them. This shuts up all the exterior Passes and Avenues, intercepts the Objects

jects that wait at the Gates of Sense, and denies them Entrance to the Apartments of the Brain, and drawing the Curtain before the Figures, that during the Action of the Day formed the busy Scenes of Imagination, - suspends the Intellectual for the Benefit of the Animal Faculties. By this Cessation of bodily, as well as mental Labour, our Strength is repaired and our Alacrity renewed, while the Oeconomy and Interests of the sensitive Soul are only attended to, in order however to make them serviceable Faculties to the most important Purposes of Life: And for this End in Persons of a hail and vigorous Constitution five Hours Sleep in twenty four, in those of a less robust and athletick Make, six or seven, and in crazy and valetudinary Persons eight, or more, may be demanded: And this leads us to consider Temperance in active Recreations of the Body or Exercise of Mind.

Besides the Provision of Rest and Sleep, which Nature has wisely and kindly made to relieve our Minds, and repair our Bodies, after Satiety and Fatigue from Application to Study or laborious Employment, Sports and Pastimes have been invented, which by unbending the Mind and gratifying the Fancy, exhilarate and relieve us, when we grow weary and uneasy. And these are
not

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not only convenient and allowable, but often necessary, not only for the Prevention of numerous Distempers, but likewise to enable the Faculties and Powers of the Soul to repeat their Duties.

The Mind of Man is an active Principle, and never to be tired with Motion; but our Spirits, the Organs of our Senses and the Muscles of our Limbs, by whose Mediation it exerts its various Operations, are wearing Instruments, that continually stand in need of fresh Recruits. Human Life therefore should consist in a constant Succession of Fatigue and Diversions; Books and Business relieve the Body and Mind under a disrelish of excessive Pleasure, as much as pleasant Conversation and Entertainments of Fancy, by renewing our Spirits and imparting fresh Vigour, restore to us our former Vivacity; and thus Toil and Pastime, Sports and Study, are reciprocal Recreations to each other.

But we find great Numbers of each Sex who offend against this Light and Dictate of Nature, which circumscribes and sets Bounds to the inordinate Encroachments upon our Lives by sensitive Pleasure arising from various Recreations, which reduced to a due Proportion, and restrained in just and proper Limits, would be not only harmless, but likewise profitable, and some-

times necessary: For we see that great Numbers of each Sex, of superior Quality and Fortunes, make Life a constant Series of Diversions, and a long coherent Chain of sensual Satisfactions, without the least Intervention or Intrusion of Labour, or any interspersed Chasms or Vacuities for Care, Study, or Contemplation; while the Satiety arising from one Recreation is never relieved but by another.

These Gentlemen of the Town, who by their ample Possessions are privileged against wholesome Labour, and exempted and excused from a healthy Constitution, to relieve the Fatigue of a Night's Rest, refresh themselves with a good Breakfast, and the Toil of Dressing being happily over, walk to some Gaming-house, and divert themselves at Cards or Hazard; and having undergone this Recreation sufficiently, they revive themselves with a plentiful Dinner, and to support that Burden, they ease their Luxury, if Company be with them, with the Bottle, or with a Nap on their Couch, if alone. Tired with these Satisfactions they repair to the Theatre, where the Opera, the Comedy, or Masquerade afford new Enjoyments, by which they are again enlivened, and enabled to bear a good Supper and a cheerful Glass, or to carry on with Vigour a Course of
Play

Play 'till two or three in the Morning. At length, after great Expence of Spirits in the various Entertainments of their Senses, they solace their weary Limbs with Sleep, and sooth the Lassitude of their Minds oppressed with an unbroken Succession of Pleasures, the only Care and Business of the Day.

As these Gentlemen abhor the Exercise of their Limbs, and consume Life in Ease and sedentary Satisfactions, so on the contrary the Country Gentleman is often ravished with the most toilsome Pastimes, and yet is no less idle than the other.

The Nature of Man being active, and his Fancy never at Rest, not perhaps in the soundest Sleep, we cannot conceive a more unsufferable Calamity than to have no Profession or Mechanick Art or Study to employ them in. The Time of such Persons lyes heavy upon them, and therefore to shake off such a weighty and grievous Burden they undertake the most difficult and wearisome Tasks, which by engaging their Imagination, and keeping their Bodies in Motion, tho' for no other End than to deliver them of the great Hardship of Inaction, are call'd Recreations; and that Appellation, which should properly be applied only to those innocent Pleasures, that refresh us after Labour
and

and Study, is almost appropriated to those that only relieve Uneasiness and Satiety of Idleness. Upon what other Foot can the Country Gentleman, who lives almost all the Year in Boots, call his Sports and Diversions by the Name of Recreations? who laughs indeed at the Sauntering and Slothful Way of the Wits and Libertines of the Town, and yet pursues, tho' by different Means, the same End which they have in view, namely, the relieving one Pastime by another, without scarce the Interposition of one useful and busy Hour. After the continued Riot of two or three Days and Nights with his intemperate Companions, to cool his Head and refresh his Body he rides a long and laborious Fox-chace; and to recover this new Expence of Spirits, the next Day over the Bottle recites the surprizing Incidents, and runs all the Ground over again. These, with the rude and noisy Delights of Bull-baiting, the cruel Diversion of Cock-fighting, and the fatiguing Marches with Arms and Ammunition to destroy the Game, in their turn succeed one another, and are the whole Entertainment and Joy of his Life.

Recreation loses its Name and Nature, when it consumes much Time, or does not succeed Contemplation or Labour.

Some

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Some few Gentlemen are however Masters of this Secret in great Perfection, who by a wise Distribution divide their Cares and Diversions so justly, that they are never tired nor disgusted with either, by which means their leisure and busy Hours are employ'd to equal Advantage, while the first never encroaches on the last, nor the last excludes the first: When they begin to feel their Labour a Burden, they relax and betake themselves to some innocent Amusement; and when they have recruited their Spirits, they resume their Business with the same Alacrity. If their Bodies stand in need of Action, they walk, or ride, or engage in some Manly Exercise; but if their Minds demand a Suspension of Thinking, they give them Ease by changing the Subject of their Contemplation, and make the Varieties of Study relieve one another; and while they allow a just Proportion of Time for alternate Labour and Recreation, they are always in good Humour, easy in themselves and useful to others.

And thus they become Obedient to the unwritten Laws of right Reason, while they use their utmost Endeavours, and express in the whole Course of their Actions a sincere Intention, to promote the Honour and Praise of their great Creator.

Thus

Thus I have collected the Duties that Man owes to God, resulting from the Contemplation of his Nature and Attributes, either Absolute or Relative, as well as those that respect Man himself. I should now in Order enumerate the Laws of Nature that regard the Ruling and Subject Parts of a Family: but this Discourse growing to a larger Volume than I intended, I shall pass over the Oeconomical Duties, which may easily be deduced from the same Self-evident Principles, and proceed to shew the Laws of Nature relating to others, especially as combined in Civil Societies.

Of the Natural Duties of Man respecting Others.

LOVE, Humanity, Benevolence and Gratitude are so evidently dictated by the Light of Reason, that Men in all Nations and all Ages have approv'd them with Universal Consent, and acknowledged their obligatory Force. Even Those who are so Wicked as not to perform these Duties to their Neighbours, will however expect, tho' very unreasonably, that their Neighbours should express such Affection and Goodness to them; That they should
not

not Hate or Revile them, nor insult their Persons with Violence, rob them of their Good Name, or despoil them of their Possessions; but on the contrary, that they should shew them on all Occasions the sincere Marks of Kindness and loving Nature, that they should commiserate their Losses and Calamities, help to defend them against Assaults and Violence, to extricate them out of Straits and Difficulties, and thankfully acknowledge the kind Services done them, and repay them with reciprocal Returns of Assistance and good Offices; and by this they plainly declare that the Law of Nature, which establishes these Duties, should operate upon others: But while they refuse to practise them themselves, they forfeit their Claim to any of these Benefits from their Neighbour, and if they are Hated and Defamed, Scorn'd and Insulted, they have no just Reason to complain; for how can hard-hearted cruel Men pretend a Right to be pitied and reliev'd by others? Or with what Forehead can they ask Mercy and Kindness in their Distress, who never shewed any to the Miserable and Unfortunate, nor did ever think Humanity or Thankfulness a Duty incumbent on them?

Nor.

Nor is it only a Natural Duty to be Courteous, Kind, Beneficent and Affectionate to those that are so to us, or that never did us any Injury, but we are obliged likewise by the Light of Reason to love our Enemies themselves, as they are our Brethren and Fellow-Creatures, as in some Respects they are endowed with the Similitude and Image of God, and as they are Beings of greater Excellence and Dignity than the rest of this sublunary World, ennobled by Intellectual Powers and Faculties, capable of Knowing, Adoring, Loving and Enjoying their Divine Author, and are not, whilst in this Life, excluded from Salvation, but may by Divine Compassion be brought to repent and reform their Lives, and so become the Objects of his Pity and Pardoning Grace; since then our Enemies have so many Qualities that are the Objects of our Love, we ought to love them so far as they are amiable.

Besides, by a Canon before laid down, we ought to imitate our Divine Author, in which the Felicity and Perfection of our Nature consists: Now the Supreme Being sets us a great Example of Loving our Enemies, for He is Kind and Merciful even to the Wicked, in prolonging their Lives, blessing them with fruit-
G ful

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ful Seasons, and filling their Hearts with Food and Gladness; and therefore we in like manner ought to express Love and Benevolence to those that Revile and Hate us. Besides as we, who are great Offenders, hope for Pardon and Mercy from our Creator and Judge, we cannot but look on it as highly reasonable that we in Conformity to his Example, passing by Resentment and Revenge, should forgive our Enemies, and express Kindness to those who maliciously use us; and while we contemplate Love, Mercy, Compassion and Benevolence as Essential Perfections included in the Idea of the Divine Being, it is beyond all Controversy that we should endeavour to be like our Blest Creator, as said before, in those imitable Attributes which I have named, and in which the Honour, Goodness and Usefulness of our Natures in so great a measure consist.

It is likewise a Duty enjoyn'd by the Law of Nature that we should observe Justice to others, and therefore not to take from him by Fraud or Violence his Goods, Treasure or Substance, or disturb him in the peaceable Possession of what is his own; and every thing is his own, that is the Acquisition or Effect of his Skill, Labour and Industry, or that he is the first Possessor of, or that he has gained by repelling

selling Force by Force, or by Lawful or Equal Reprizals, or which no other Person has a rightful Claim to: And the Extent of this Duty is contained in this general Rule, that no Man should do to another what he would not have done to himself; a Rule of Justice so evidently equal and binding by the Light of Nature, that the Pagan World, without the Aid of Revelation, universally consented to it, insomuch that the Prudent and Worthy Emperor *Alexander Severus* caused it to be inscribed over all the Doors and Pillars of his Palace. It is therefore by the Light of Nature a Criminal Violation of the Rule of Justice to take away another Man's Right by Deceit or Violence; whence it follows likewise, that it is a Dictate of right Reason that no Man by Calumny and Defamation should take away the Reputation and Good Name of his Neighbour; that he should not be Proud and Haughty, nor assume to himself greater Merit than is his Due, nor deny to his Neighbour what is really his; that is, he ought not to over-value himself nor under-value others, for such Injustice is manifestly founded upon a false Conceit or Idea of our own Worth, an immoderate Self-love, and a criminal Diminution and Contempt of others.

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Humility, Modesty, courteous and unprovoking Deportment are likewise by the Law of Reason due to our Neighbour, and are Duties established by the Consent of all Nations, because we expect the same from him; and therefore Pride, the contrary Vice and Deformity of the Mind, is justly hated and universally condemn'd and expos'd; this Habit, so odious for its Moral Turpitude, mostly expresses it self in lofty Looks, haughty Gestures, insolent Language, Ostentation, Vain-glory, and magnifying beyond decent Bounds our own Riches, Beauty, Capacity and worthy Endowments, while in the mean time we speak slightly and contemptuously of others. It shews it self likewise in expecting great Honour, Esteem and Applause from all about us, while we return little or none to them, but are continually hawking after Praise, and listning to our own Encomiums: and of all the Masters of Adulation, the finest and most exquisite is he, that falls in love with himself, and becomes his own Flatterer; for while he sits to himself he draws his own Picture to a prodigious Degree above the Life, heightening all his Beauties with Delicate and Masterly Touches, improving his Merit, and concealing with consummate Skill all his Blemishes and Defects.

There

There is another Species of proud Men, who, to conceal their Ambition, and Love of Power and Applause, affect Humility, Condescension, and soft Behaviour, and so to their Pride add Hypocrisy. These have the Art of disguising their inward haughty Temper, and will receive you with soft-looking Malice, humble Scorn, and tender low-bowing Diffimulation; they embrace and caress you while they are seeking your Ruin, and appear like Friends and Men of Honour, while they are striving to supplant you and get your Place: but these Gentlemen of the Courtly Breeding in Fashion, are not more humble than the others of a lofty Demeanour, but less sincere.

Modesty in our Behaviour to others is likewise an Endowment dictated by the Light of Nature, and is so much the more justified and applauded by Mankind, as their Reason is more improv'd and their Manners more cultivated and civiliz'd. Nor is Impudence, its opposite Quality, less censur'd and condemn'd in all Ages, and all Nations, and therefore is a Violation of the Law of Nature.

It is the Province of true Judgment to discern the Dissimilitude and different Natures of Things, that having a near Agreement and Resemblance to each other are

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apt to impose upon undistinguishing and weak-sighted Men, and appear to them the same. Parsimony and Avarice are endow'd with a Complexion and Features so like to Frugality, and Luxury and Profusion carry such a lively Appearance of Magnificence and Generosity, and in short every Virtue lying in the midst between two Extrems, has so much in common with each, that to the Less-discerning it is difficult to abstract and separate their Ideas; a thousand times we mistake one for the other, and bestow that Applause upon pretended Virtue, which is only due to the Genuine and Real.

Impudence is so nearly ally'd to Fortitude and a Praise-worthy Assurance, that it often passes upon the Vulgar for one of those laudable Qualifications. The Heroick Boldness and Constancy, which in a great Man result from the Consciousness of his Merit and Integrity, are often so well counterfeited by a daring Criminal, who by the most unwarrantable Means pursues the blackest Designs, that the Difference is not easily discover'd. Since a generous Fire and a dauntless Resolution usually accompany the Actions of brave and elevated Spirits engag'd in the Pursuits of some honourable End, where-ever Spectators see the like Ardor and Firmness they are
ready

ready to conclude it must arise from the same Principle, and is employ'd for the like worthy Purposes; and for this Reason Impudence is so often prevalent and successful, without any solid Merit to support it. When it appears at the Bar, it hangs eternally on a Cause, and never knowing when 'tis answer'd, with a Torrent of Words and false Eloquence bears down all Learning, Law and Sense. Among the Professors of Physick it supplies the Want of Judgment, Experience, and Industry. 'Tis reported that *Pontæus* the famous *Charletan* us'd to declare that of all the various Countries he had travell'd through, he found the greatest Stock of Credulity in this Island: We have Numbers of People among us, who cannot imagine that any Man should confidently assume to himself the Power of Life and Death, and at the same time be very ignorant and illiterate: and tho' they see perpetual Instances of his Incapacity, and are deceiv'd every Day by his vain and ineffectual Promises, they will still believe and still be deceiv'd.

Impudence emboldens a Man to undertake any Task tho' ever so unequal to his Abilities, and carries him through it with Spirit and Alacrity; it enlivens his Hopes, diminishes the Difficulties that obstruct, and magnifies the Means in his Hands,

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that promote his Designs. This single Qualification will fit a Man in his own Opinion for any Post of Trust or Business. It will make him a Politician, without Sagacity or the Knowledge of Humane Nature; 'twill inspire him with Geography, and teach him the Situation of Cities and Countries, tho' he scarce before had seen a Map; a Man adorn'd with this Virtue, is qualified indifferently to be a Colonel of Horse, a Flag Officer, or a Judge. In Conversation he has great Advantages, where he claims an Insight into the Depths of Philosophy, is acquainted with the Secrets and Springs of Government, arrogates a refin'd Taste in Wit and Criticism, and puts all Learning and good Sense out of Countenance.

This unblushing Quality is likewise the most effectual Means to procure Power, Wealth, and Honour. 'Tis craving, insinuating, importunate, and receives no Denial. It supplies the Place of Merit of all Kinds, and no Virtue is wanting where Impudence is present. 'Tis the shortest Way to be excellent in Science or Business, and one would think that the present Age had generally found out the Secret, and had therefore in the Views of Profit apply'd themselves more to the Improvement of their Foreheads than their Heads.

A frontless Man is never to be disturb'd in his Opinion of his own Worth and Capacity; is hard and insensible to Reproaches, and entirely regardless of his Character; he is unconcern'd at his prostituted Honour, and mindless of every thing but his main Point in View, which he pursues by Means of any Denomination: In Company he inveighs against those pretended Crimes in others, which are really his own: Falshood and Impudence are the Faults he charges upon his Enemies, with the utmost Expression of Detestation, that weak People, on whose Credulity he relies as his principal Support, may be induced to believe, that no Man can be egregiously guilty of those Offences, of which he shews so great an Abhorrence.

This inflexible Assurance, of so much Value and extensive Usefulness, which not only covers, but cures many Defects of Mankind, and adorns them with every Excellence, it not however of such easy Acquisition as some People imagine.

To form an impudent Man of the first Class must conspire extraordinary native Genius, and a Mind well turn'd for this Perfection, as well as great Industry and unwearied Application. Some indeed have that Felicity of Complexion, that being easy to be instructed they come forward a-pace,

pace, and make astonishing Improvements in a little Time: But the greatest Part of Men must take some Pains, and undergo with Patience repeated Practice, before they can attain this Qualification in an eminent Degree, and subdue the last Efforts of expiring Shame. Before they become fix'd and obdurate they will often feel great Strife and Contention within; and perhaps in some unguarded Hour, seduced by the Charms and Allurements of Modesty, they will yield to the sudden Temptation, be surpriz'd with a Blush, and relapse into a Fit of Bashfulness. The Case of these Men is like that of young Women, who are yet Novices in Vice, they must go through a Course of Iniquity, that they may at length subdue all Diffidence and get a compleat Conquest over Remorse.

And some of these, after long Endeavours to fix and determine their fluctuating Temper, will perhaps still find themselves disappointed, and acknowledge they are unable to extinguish all Remains of Shame.

In the other Extream there are several Kinds of false Modesty, one of which I shall mention that has not I think been much taken Notice of in Writing.

It is no genuine Modesty for any Man to have a far worse Opinion of his Understanding, Wit, and Virtue than they deserve;

deserve; this would be Ingratitude to our great Benefactor, Injustice to our selves, and Falshood in our Conceptions. Since Truth is a Conformity in our Ideas to the Objects they represent, we ought always to have a just Perception of our own Qualities. To set too high a Value on our Merit, or entertain an injurious Opinion of our selves, is equally erroneous, since by one and the other we equally deviate from the Rule of judging Right. Should a beauriful Woman (which perhaps may never happen) believe herself deform'd, or an accomplish'd Gentleman think himself a Clown, or should a Man of Learning, Sense, and Wit, think contemptibly of his Endowments, this would be a culpable Diminution of their Merit; nor would it only imply a false Conception, but 'tis a very hurtful Error, for this false Modesty restrains a Man from attempting and pursuing generous Designs, while from a faulty Diffidence and Distrust of his Talents and Abilities he forbears to employ them; and thus his Judgment, good Sense, and Capacity for Business, are in a great measure useless to the World.

Fortitude is a Virtue enjoin'd by the Light of Nature, which imparts Constancy or Firmness to the Mind, and makes it Bold and Intrepid in undertaking a worthy

thy Enterprize, and in the Pursuit of it patient of Toil and Suffering, stedfast against Opposition, and resolute and undaunted in conquering all Difficulties that obstruct the Accomplishment of it. There is a generous and impulsive Ardour found in the Native Constitution of some extraordinary Persons, that qualifies them for forming, attempting and performing of great Designs, while the timorous and poor-spirited Man, tho' endowed with great Capacity, becomes almost Useless and Unprofitable, not being able, by reason of his Diffidence, Timidity, or want of Self-determining Power, to engage in and carry on with Success any thing Great, Praiseworthy or Important.

This in it self considered is a natural Infirmary, but when those that labour under it voluntarily neglect the right Exercise of their Reason in cultivating their Minds, and taking Care or Pains to regulate their Sentiments, corroborate and confirm their Minds in Habits of Virtue, and particularly this of Constancy or Moral Fortitude, in undertaking Good and avoiding Evil Actions, then this want of Resolution or Courage is a Moral Evil, the Defect and Turpitude of the Mind. For when we discern by the Light of Nature, that we are obliged to do any Action, it
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is a very easy Consequence that we must adhere firmly to the Choice of that Action, and contend with all Difficulties that oppose our Way in the Accomplishment of our Design; and therefore it is Nature's Law, that we should be Valiant and Intrepid in doing Good, that we should not be daunted or discouraged by any Dangers, nor deterred from our laudable Enterprizes by the Frowns or Menaces of the Great; but by an inflexible Course of laudable and worthy Actions we should daily approach nearer to consummate Heroick Virtue, according to the Maxim laid down before, that the highest Degrees of all Things should be desired, that for themselves, or as such, are desirable. It is often owing to a culpable Weakness and Puffillaminy, that many are discouraged from beginning a laudable Work, or are deterred from carrying it on, by slight or at least surmountable Obstacles, or Phantastick and Imaginary Dangers.

Of all Instances of Cowardice and Puffillaminy, that seems the most Base and Dishonourable, when a Man cannot, for the Preservation of his Virtue, the Dignity and Perfection of his Nature, undergo the Derision of dissolute and irreligious Scoffers. Man is by Nature so great a Lover of Applause and Popularity, that perhaps no other
Inclination

Inclination sways his Soul with a stronger Bias; as in general it governs his Designs and animates the Execution of them, so in particular it is often the Spring of that Praise which he bestows upon others, while he makes his Court to every Man, and says something Handsome and Obliging to all who come into his Company, that they in their turn may speak well of him, and propagate his Reputation. This inbred Passion makes Men incapable of bearing Neglect and Contempt, and nothing more crosses their Desires and gives them more Uneasiness, than to become the Object of Jest and Derision.

This, I persuade my self, has often more weakened, and at length extinguished, the unconfirmed Virtue of young Persons, and made more Converts to Irreligion and Immorality, than any other Discouragement; for when sneering Libertines and ingenious Laughers set upon modest Innocence, and expose a reserved Behaviour limited by the Precepts of Morality, the bashful Professor is put out of Countenance, and not being able to stand the Shocks of their repeated Raillery, to avoid Scandal and Shame yields to Temptations, and rather chuses to be Vicious and Fashionable, than Blameless and Ridiculous. To obviate this Objection to the Practice of
Virtue,

Virtue, that it draws upon a Man Disrespect and Reproach, this Dictate of Reason rightly exercised should be considered, that is, that the Commendations and Esteem of bad Men are neither to be hoped for, nor desired, by the Virtuous and Good.

When contending Parties divide a Nation, and oppose each other with the utmost Violence, it is not reasonable to expect they should magnify one another, and be zealous to protect each other's Reputation: Now those Persons who have espoused the Interest of Vice and Profaneness are an implacable Party, who declare against the Righteous and Innocent; a Party that appeared early in the World, and is so general, that they do not only embroil a single Nation, but they labour to suppress Virtue and exterminate Religion from their Species.

Now as it is not imaginable that this immoral and detestable Faction, who undermine the Laws of right Reason, and strike at the Foundation of unwritten Religion, should ever speak honourably of the Patrons of the one and the Practices of the other, so it is true that Men of Virtue have no Reason to desire their Praises; since, as that would occasion a Censure upon them, that they had deserv'd the Applause of ill Men by some criminal

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criminal Actions and culpable Compliances, (for if an Atheist crys a Man up, we grow diffident of his Religion, or if a Libertine commends him we suspect his Virtue) so it should be considered that to depend on the Good Opinion of Bad Men is to put our Ease and Happiness out of our own Possession, and to make them over to such Persons in Trust for us, who bear us Ill-will and Hatred upon the account of our most valuable Qualities.

Besides, would Men attend to the Dictates of Reason, and view this in a right Point of Light, they would discern that the Derision and Reproaches of the Profligate and Immoral are in reality great Encomiums and conspicuous Marks of true Honour. The Approbation and Praise we receive from the Virtuous, the Discreet and Wise, impart to our Minds secret Joy and Satisfaction, as they give us some Assurance of our Integrity and Merit; and for the same Reason the Calumnies and ill Representations of us by irreligious and immoral Men should be looked on as a Testimony they bear to our Virtue, and an Honour they do us, to acknowledge that we are unlike to themselves. When the Philosopher was told that some bad Men had reviled him, he replied, *I am obliged to those Persons*
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for celebrating my Praises, and shall endeavour to behave myself so well as never to forfeit their ill Opinion.

To be vilified and derided by the Haters of Virtue, and Patrons of Impiety, is therefore an Honour on which a Man may justly value himself; it is enough to move Vanity in our own Minds, and Envy in others; and not to be elated under such a Temptation, were the true Notion of Honour understood, would be a Mark of eminent Modesty. What are the Shouts and Acclamations that rung in the Ears of *Cæsar*, when he entered *Rome* in Triumph, if compared with the Applauses that *Socrates* received, when he came into the Theater, upon the Account of his singular Virtue, I mean, the loud Derision of the degenerate *Athenians*? With what Constancy and Satisfaction did he hear the highest Expressions of Contempt and Indignation bearing Witness to his Piety and uncommon Merit? Nor is it unreasonable to think that this wise Philosopher might entertain with Pleasure such universal Approbation from sincere and unbiassed Judges, since never was any Applause more unfeigned and free from Flattery, than when that flagitious and immoral Assembly proclaim'd their Dislike and Detestation of such a virtuous Man.

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Thus a Person of superior Virtue may enjoy Malevolence and Defamation, turn Invectives into Panegyricks, and rejoyce in the Reproaches of the Vicious, which are the Reward of Virtue, as well as the Praises of good Men, both equally expressing their Opinion of our worthy Qualities, which is the true Nature of Fame and Glory. The Integrity of ill Men may, as suggested before, be depended on, when by their Evil-speaking they publickly confess the Merit of others; and in this respect their Calumnies surpass the Encomiums of the Good, who from a charitable Disposition may flatter us with too great Expressions of their Esteem, and exalt us with Praises, to which our Virtue is unequal.

Of Truth or Veracity.

AS the Law of Nature has oblig'd Men to combine in Cities or Bodies polittick, as hereafter shall be shewn, so it has bound them to speak Truth in their Contracts, Commerce and Conversation, without which Probity those Communities cannot subsist.

Moral Truth, as distinguish'd from Natural and Metaphysical, is acknowledg'd
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by Philosophers and Divines to be a Conformity between our Words and Thoughts, and if this Virtue results from the Signification, and the Thing signified, it may with Parity of Reason be extended to all other exterior Marks, by which we are guided by Nature to communicate the Sentiments and Affections of the Soul. The Motion of our Limbs, the Figure of the Face, the Cast of the Eye, and our various Gestures, are as really expressive as Words themselves, of the Disposition of the Heart and the Ideas of the Mind. Our Looks and Behaviour, which are the silent Rhetorick of the Body, are, as well as our Tongues, the Interpreters of our Thoughts and Passions. The Eye by its Glances, the Mouth by its Smiles, the Cheeks by their Blushes, and the Forehead and Brows by their various Contractions and Expansions, plainly discover our Internal Temper. Hence the ancient Pantomimes were able to make known their Sentiments, and hold Dialogues with one another in the Theater, to the delightful Entertainment of the Spectators, not the Audience, without the Aid of the Voice, or the Mediation of articulated Sound. Hence likewise the Sculptor and Painter, who are eminent in their Art, can delineate in the Countenance, Eyes and Postures of their Figures, Shame and Hor-

ror, Fear and Joy, Admiration and Love, in the utmost Perfection. One animates his Canvass, and the other his Marble, with passionate Emotions, and exhibits the whole Soul in naked or coloured Lines; and though the Statue or Picture are destitute of Words, they strike the Imagination with great Force, and touch our Affections with unvocal Eloquence. If the Mind and its Perturbations are shewn so much to the Life in the Copy, they must at least be as strong in the Original.

Since our Looks and Gestures are often employed in conveying to each other our inward Sentiments, when they are perverted from this End, and we at any Time wear an Aspect, or assume an Appearance contrary to the Temper and Sense of our Minds with Purpose to deceive the Spectator, we are as truly guilty of Falshood and Dissimulation, in this Deformity or Disagreement of our Souls to our outward Demeanor, as we are in the Dissimilitude between them and our Articulate Expressions. This is Immorality in the Face, Hypocrisy in our Gestures, and Fraud and Imposture in our external Deportment.

Nothing is more fallacious than to guess at the Soul by the exterior Aspect. It is true, such native Simplicity, Benevolence, and Humanity, such Openness and Ingenu-
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ity are seen in the Countenance of Some, that as soon as they appear, we are prejudiced in their Favour. Some on the contrary have Lines so intricate and disagreeable, and such a dark, designing Look, and in Others we observe such a firm Assurance, such harsh and forbidding Features, and such a mischievous and fatal Countenance, that the Knave in one, and the Miscreant in the other, are conspicuous at first Sight. But though this is often true, yet the Observation is not to be extended too far, for we sometimes meet with Persons of excellent Endowments, who have no Marks in their Faces that promise Virtue or Ingenuity, while others, to conceal their Vices, so well counterfeit the External Appearance of Probity, Compassion and Benevolence, that they often impose upon the World, and carry on their ill Designs under that Mask with Success.

There are in this Age many Instances of this Kind, that have perhaps as great a Genius for Imposture and Dissimulation, as have ever appeared among Mankind, who cultivated by the most refined Rules and improved by assiduous Practice equal the most celebrated Hypocrites, that have flourished in any Age or Country, *Cæsar Borgia* and the Pope his Father not excepted.

cepted. Their Minds are possessed by all Kinds of Vice in their greatest Height, yet their Aspect is the Seat of the contrary Virtues, and such is their Contempt of Truth and so constant their Dissimulation, that they are usually most clearly and perfectly understood by assigning the contrary to what they affirm and profess; especially if they back their Promises of Favour and Kindness with solemn Vows and repeated Protestations, with Smiles, Caresses, and the highest outward Expressions of Sincerity; for then, though you were doubtful before, you may be sure now, they intend to deceive you, while they laugh in themselves to find you so weak a Man, and so unacquainted with the intreaguings World, as to believe Oaths and the most Sacred Asseverations, the threadbare Rhetorick and stale Arts of Delusion, by which they ensnare the Men that have Business with them, and cruelly mock the disappointed Suitor; and this they more easily effect by adding to their repeated Oaths and Imprecations all the Marks of Integrity, which accompany the Looks and Gestures of a Man of Virtue and Honour; while they deride and hate your Person they will embrace and caress you with endearing Language and Raptures of Joy, and tho' they have often deceived their Acquaintance, and
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they as often resolved no more to be deceived, yet the finished Dissemblers will still work some new Miracle of a Lie to confirm their Faith, and engage them to believe and be deluded again.

There is not a greater Dissimilitude between the Mind and the outward Expressions of it, than in those well-bred Persons, who have not conquered, but only learned to conceal their inordinate Passions.

There are Gentlemen of such a Cholerick Spirit, that among their Domesticks they often seem transported to a degree of Phrenzy, however when they go abroad, or Company come Home to them, they are presently the most easy and affable, the most courteous and obliging Men in the World. If they hear that a Person is come to visit them, whom they perfectly hate, tho' they fly out at his Name into the utmost Disorder, yet as soon as he appears they run to him, take him in their Arms, and salute him with the tenderest Marks of Friendship: they are infinitely obliged to him for his odious Visit, and highly pleased with the Conversation of one, whom above all others they despise and detest; and by this Means they send away the deluded Guest extreamly satisfied with his kind Reception. Many of this Class, meerly from a Principle of Civility

and fine Manners, strive to oblige and make every Man easy, by substituting an outward Resemblance instead of real and sincere Benevolence, and in this they have acquired such masterly Skill, that by their friendly Demeanour and vehement Declarations of Kindness, now taking you by the Hand, now leaning on your Shoulder with Smiles and Looks, and Language, that use to attend Sincerity, the consummate Artists will persuade you they are in earnest; yet they embrace the next they meet in the same Transport, and show a particular Respect to all Men living, their Civility and Goodwill consisting in nothing else, but a Form of Words or a Set of Gestures, which they use in the same mechanical Manner to all they know, without any inward Emotion or Concern.

Such a fine Person as this, instead of being an affectionate Husband, and taking Pleasure in his Lady's Conversation, is extremely decent, never contradicts her in a rude Manner, and yet never complies with her Persuasions and important Requests. He treats her with the Behaviour of a Gentleman, as he would any other Woman of Quality, and pays this courtly Equivalent instead of an indulgent Conjugal Love. However these well-bred Men, who make their becoming Address without any inward

ward Passion go for Affection and Goodwill, do at least express their Approbation of sincere Virtue, else why do they make constant Pretences to it, and affect to appear the Reverse to what they really are? And this must be allowed a great Compliment and Respect that Vice pays to Virtue, while it is ashamed of its own genuine Shape and Appearance, and always strives to conceal itself in that of the contrary Quality; and were it as easy to practise Virtue as to commend it, they would, no doubt, engage in the Pursuit of it: But while their Interests and Prejudices, as well as the Power of evil Propensions and confirmed Habits, will not admit the Reception of genuine Probity, they put on the external Marks of it, and make good Manners supply the Place of Morality. It is indeed true, that tho' this will not much avail the well-mannered Hypocrite, yet it is not so hurtful to Society. A genteel, civil Knave, is more supportable than a rugged, ill-behaved Miscreant, and we are better pleased to be cheated with the good Grace and handsome Manner of a Courtier, who never seems in Jest, and never is in Earnest; than by a surly Clown or a rough Block-head.

And if this Diffimulation and Falshood in Looks and Gestures is plainly forbidden
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by the Laws of Nature, as a Violation of that Sincerity and Truth which is due to others, it is much more easy to see, that not only bare-faced Lying and Perjury, but likewise all artful and subtle Collusions, by Equivocations and Mental Reservations, and double Meanings, by which we deceive our Neighbour, must be notorious Transgressions of the Precepts of Natural Reason rightly exercised.



S E C T. IV.

Of Civil Societies.

MANKIND have been induced to form themselves into Civil Societies for their mutual Defence against the Insults of common Enemies, for the Comfort and Satisfaction of Conversation, and the mutual Supplies of each other's Wants and Necessities; and since the Individuals cannot, but with the greatest Difficulty, be preserved, at least not so happily, while they continue Independent and Unconnected, without Order and Political Regulation, Natural Light shews that it is the Will and Pleasure of the Supreme Being, that Men should combine in some Species of
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of Government, by his making it Necessary, at least highly Useful and Convenient for them, and by making them apt and fit for such a Civil Union; since it is an evident Principle, that it is a Man's Duty as well as Interest to do every thing that contributes to his Preservation and promotes his Well-being and Felicity; whence results the Moral Obligation that Men are under to form Political or Organized Communities; and 'tis very clear that Mankind are in a much safer and happier Condition when gathered and fashioned into such Bodies, than when in a separate and independent State, where the Weaker are exposed to the Insults and Cruelty of the Stronger, where Decisions of Right are made by the Sword, and every Man thinks himself intitled to every Thing he has Power to seize; and therefore even the wild and barbarous Nations, in every thing else rude and uncivilized, have discovered the Necessity of entering into Societies, and framing some Species of Government.

Without Laws, and the coercive Restraints of Civil Authority, a State of Misrule, Disorder and Confusion must necessarily be introduced, where savage Men, like wild Beasts in ancient Amphitheatres let loose upon one another, would turn their
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Country into a Scene of Rapine, Blood and Defolation, while they who are armed with the greatest Strength destroy and devour the Weaker, and make the World an unfrequented, howling Wilderness. No Man's Life, Liberty or Estate would be secure one Moment from the Violence and Oppression of Cruel and Merciless Invaders, while all Property would be precarious, and no Man could for one Hour call any Thing his own; and in this State of Anarchy or Distraction, where no Tribunals establish Right, or determine what is Wrong, where there is no Magistratical Authority to succour the Oppressed and relieve the Injured, any Man may be despoiled of his Goods, and dispossessed of his Lands, without Remedy or Reparation: He will indeed be at Liberty to right and revenge himself when insulted in his Person, or plundered of his Substance, which perhaps he has not Power to do; or if he has, what an unequal and partial Judge is he like to prove in his own Case, and how improbable is it that he will set Bounds to his Revenge, and acquiesce in equal Reprizals? And in this lawless and Chaos-like State of Things, all the Motives of Industry and Labour in procuring the Conveniences of Life, or more plentiful Possessions, will be utterly

terly cut off; for who will strive and labour hard, where there is no Security of keeping what by his Diligence he gets? What Man will be Careful and Industrious, when he knows that Another more powerful will reap the Fruits of his Care, and enjoy the Acquisitions of his Sweat and Toil?

And therefore as well-concerted Schemes of Publick Communities must greatly advance the Happiness of their Members, so even the worst Form of Government is better than none. And hence the Individuals of Human Race have evidently discerned that it is ~~their~~ Interest to associate themselves, and combine in Political Bodies, for the mutual Defence of their Persons and Properties, who in a loose and unconnected State are unavoidably expos'd to the fatal Mischiefs before-mentioned.

And hence it is clear by Natural Light that it is the Will of the Divine Lord and Governor of the World, that ~~Men~~ should enter into Publick Societies for preventing these enormous and otherwise inevitable Evils, that tend to the Ruin and Destruction, at least the great Calamity and Misery of Mankind; who, as said before, are obliged by the Preceptive Pleasure of the Divine Being, discovered by Natural Reason, to employ all Means in
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their Power conducive to their Preservation and Happiness.

Any number of Men that are conscious of their Obligation by mutual Consent to form a Body Politick, are bound by the Law of Nature or Reason to chuse that Form of Government they shall believe in their Circumstances will most promote their Peace and Happiness, which is the End of Government; and therefore before any Frame or Constitution of Civil Government is settled the Individuals are at Liberty to chuse for themselves either Monarchy, whether Despotick and Absolute, or Limited and Circumscribed by Laws and Partitions of Legislative Authority, or otherwise diversified by the original Temperament and Constitution of Civil Power, or Aristocracy or a Republick, or a Government in which those three Forms are mixt and incorporated, and that takes its Denomination from the superior and prevalent Part of either of them in the Constructure of the Body Politick.

When the Form of Government is established, and the Ruler or Rulers nominated, and Obedience and Fidelity are stipulated to their Authority, it is certain they must be endowed with as much Civil Power as will enable them to perform their Duty in Protecting and Governing

verning their Subjects; and this sufficient Power can only proceed from God, who alone is able to give it, as being the Supreme unlimited Lord and Ruler of the Universe. None can be endowed with any Civil Authority in his Dominions, but what he is pleased to impart or delegate to them; as no Man can have any Civil Power in the King's Dominions, but what he derives from the King's Grant or Commission; since then all Princes, Potentates and Magistrates are subordinate and dependent Officers of State under the Universal and Absolute Governor of the World, as much as the Train of Subaltern Military Commanders are dependent on the General, and the Civil Officers on the Supreme Magistrate, it is easy to discover by the Light of Nature, that the Fountain of all Authority or binding Power is the Divine Being, who by making Political Societies necessary, at least highly conducive to the Benefit and Felicity of Mankind, has signified his Will, that is, has promulged his Law, that Men, his Subjects, should enter into such Societies, whose essential Constitution requires a Ruling and a Subject Part; that is, that one or more should have Governing Authority, and the rest be obliged to obey their Laws.

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By this the Supreme Divine Ruler declares his Will that such his inferior Civil Magistrates shall be invested with sufficient Authority to perform the Duty of their Office; for since he has declared his Pleasure that Magistrates should be appointed, he at the same time signifies his Will that they shall be invested with Civil Power to execute their Office; for if he ordains the Office, he must likewise ordain the Power necessary to the Discharge of it, otherwise he must be supposed to intend an End without Means to procure it, which would be the highest Absurdity, and besides it would be the Duty of Magistrates in their high Station in the Government to rule their People without Ruling Power, and so would be obliged to an Impossibility.

The Measure of this Civil Power.

AND as the Civil Power of all Magistrates, who are subordinate Governors to God the Supreme King, cannot be communicated or conferred on them but from the Source and Possessor of all Legislative Authority, so the Measure or Extent of Legislative Magistratical Authority must be settled according

as the Supreme Governor has expressed his Will concerning it ; and God having signified his Pleasure that he will delegate and convey to each of his Subordinate Rulers and Subaltern Officers a Part of his own Authority, the Measure or Extent of it must, as said, be such as will make them capable of performing their Duty and executing their Offices : For the just Measure of a Means is to be fixed by its Relation to the End ; if it is short and insufficient to procure the End, it is insignificant, and in effect, no Means at all ; if it exceeds that Proportion, it is inordinate and superfluous ; so that the Proportion of Authority lodged in the Civil Magistrate must be such, and so much, as the End and Design of Government requires.

And the Extent of the Magistrate's Power being adjusted and settled, it is very evident, as before suggested, that God, the Sole Governor of the Universe and the Fountain of all Authority, must confer upon him his Ruling Power ; for since it is a Civil Government erected within his Empire and Dominions, no Man can have any Right or Title but from God the Supreme Lord in actual rightful Possession : It is therefore plain that the Magistrate can have no Governing Authority, but what

is delegated and derived from God, by which he becomes a subordinate Officer, Deputy or Vicegerent, dependent on the only Potentate and Universal King; and the highest and most absolute Princes on Earth cannot be invested with any other Legal Power than that of Commissioners, Lieutenants, or Vice-rulers under the Supreme Divine Monarch; as their own Officers Civil and Military, from the highest to the lowest, have no obligatory Authority but what they derive from the Commissions, Grants and Charters of their Sovereigns, and therefore always act in Subordination and Dependence on them; and this Communication of Power to the Civil Magistrate, in the Proportion before settled, is plainly discovered by the Exercise of Human Reason.

Since then God, the Sovereign of the Universe and possessed of all Governing Power, by revealing his Will, or promulgating his Law by the Ministry or Mediation of Human Reason, has obliged the Individuals of Mankind to enter into Civil Societies, and by the Use of the same Reasoning Faculty notified his Pleasure what Proportion the Ruling Part of those Societies should be invested with, and declared his Will by the same way of Deduction that he will allow to the Ruler
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(or Rulers) of the Society, when nominated by the Electors, such a Proportion of his Authority, as will qualify him for the Performance of his Duty, as his delegated and subordinate Officer in the Universal Empire of the World; it will follow, that Princes and Potentates have no more Legal Power to reverse God's Decrees, rescind or repeal his Laws, to command what he has antecedently forbidden, or forbid what he has commanded, than a Deputy-Lieutenant or a Mayor of a Corporation have, by Vertue of the King's Commission or Charter, to annul his Orders, or to repeal the Laws of the Land. Whenever then the Civil Magistrate enjoins any Thing before prohibited, and *vice versa*, by the Divine Supreme Ruler, who gave him his Authority, that Command is not Obligatory, nor is any Subject bound to pay Obedience to it as a Law, whatever Submission he may be obliged to for the sake of preserving the Peace and Tranquility of the Society.

This is manifest in Cases where the Magistrate Commands or Prohibits any Action that evidently contradicts right Reason in its first, clear and more immediate Dictates, and it is likewise true, as far as consequent Conclusions may be plainly deduced from the first more evident Principles.

When therefore the Civil Magistrate shall enact a Law enjoying any Thing against the Law of God, known by the Light of Nature, it is only an empty Order, and the naked Matter of a Precept unanimated by a binding Force, which is the *ratio formalis*, the Life and Soul of a Law, which without it, is no more than the Command of one, who in other Things has a Power to give obligatory Precepts, but in these Cases, which right Reason discovers God has determined before, the Authority of the Magistrate is limited and excluded; nor can any Man be farther satisfied, that he is obliged to observe the Laws of his Country, than he is satisfied, that they are not repugnant or opposite to those of the Divine Being.

But tho' it is manifest we ought not to violate the Ordinances of God in any Instance, out of Compliance with the Commands of Civil Powers, yet it often happens that for the preserving Peace and Tranquility, and preventing Disorder and Confusion in the State, the Penalty accompanying Disobedience to such a Law ought to be undergone without Resistance, rather than the Society should be embroiled and distracted with intestine Commotions; for whilst those Violations of the Ruler's Fidelity and Justice founded on right Reason,

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are not so great as to threaten the Subversion of Liberty and Property, nor are inconsistent with the Ends of entering into Society, nor apparently threaten the Destruction and Ruin of the Government, they will not justify forceable Opposition, which must involve the Commonwealth in Civil Distractions; for then the Remedy will be more grievous than the Disease, and the Harm and Damage to the Community from such a violent Conduct will far outweigh all the Emolument and Good that can arise from such an unwarrantable Contention. But in Case however that Sovereign Powers should invade the Lives and Estates of the Subjects with inhumane and barbarous Cruelties, should they let loose an Army of unmerciful and bloody Ruffians to assassinate and massacre their People, or dispossess them of their Lands and Habitations, drive them from their Farms and Homes, and compel them to wander as Fugitives through distant Places, in Want and Misery; or should they change the barbarous and horrid Schemes of former Oppressors, and instead of Fire and Sword destroy their People by Forms of Law, and pretended Justice, should they by forged Evidence, forced Interpretations, wrested and constrained Meanings, and by all the infernal Arts of a mock Tribunal,

or inexorable Court of Inquisition, refine upon the less effectual Methods of Destruction by Burning and Massacres; in such Cases no doubt it is not only warrantable, but Praise-worthy, to repel Force by Force, and defend one's native Country from the Insults and Devastations of an inhumane Tyrant and a merciless Ravager.

Or should Princes carry on their cruel and malignant Designs by subtle Plots and malicious Contrivances, should they interpret Innocent Assemblies to be Routs and Riots against the Peace of the State, or industriously provoke the People to make Complaints, and grieve and vex them on purpose to ensnare them in disorderly and unwarrantable Actions, and then fall upon them as Rebels, and under that specious Pretence take away their Lives by the Sword or the Gibbet, involving Multitudes of unconcerned and innocent Persons in the same Destruction, should they encourage and maintain a flagitious, mercenary Band of perjured Persons to swear Men out of their Lives, Liberties, and Estates, If, I say, by such wicked and inhumane Methods they discover an Intention to ruin and destroy their People, and utterly disappoint the Ends of Government, In these Cases Right Reason will justify such Resistance and Opposition as is necessary to the
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the Safety and Preservation of the Commonwealth.

The Civil Magistrate being posselt of Ruling Authority for the Ends of Government, that is *Salus Reipublicæ*, the Safety and Felicity as well of the Governours as the Subjects, This political Institution resulting from the Dictates and Light of Reason, as before shewn, it follows evidently that the Supreme Magistrate has not an absolute and boundless Power by his Divine Commission, but is restrained and limited to those Acts only that are conducive to the Happiness and Well-being of the Community: as he has not Authority given him to act against the antecedent Laws of his Supreme Sovereign, so has he no legal Power to act against the Ends of Government, for the Acquisition of which his Office is instituted.

And since the Magistrate cannot lay any obligatory Command upon the Subject, that can annul or make void any antecedent Law or Precept of God, the Subject must be allowed a Power to reflect, reason, compare, and judge, whether the Command or Injunction of the Magistrate be agreeable to his former Obligations to Divine Laws, otherwise he is at a full Stop, and must always stand diffident and undetermined; because without such balancing,

comparing, and judging, he can never know whether this, that the Magistrate commands, be not before forbidden by some Divine Law, which he is bound to obey, notwithstanding what the Magistrate shall enjoyn to the contrary: And hence it is plain, that a Man must be allowed a Judgment of private Discretion; for how else should he discern his Obligation to the Laws of God or Man, and which to submit to, in case they should clash or contradict each other? To tell a Man that he must in this Case submit his private Judgment to the Publick Wisdom of the Civil Society, is to affront and mock our Understandings. If I am obliged to acquiesce in the Determination of the Ruling Powers, I suppose you will say there are convincing Reasons for it, whence I may discern my Obligation to lay by my own Opinion, and act by Publick Decisions; and if so, must I not be allowed a free Power to judge of these Reasons, why I should give up my own to the Publick Sense, which is to yield the Point in Controversy, and declare for the Side of a private Judgment of Discretion, I mean in all operative Opinions, concerning the Moral Good or Evil of our Actions, and not in meer Speculations and Sentiments, not implying Actions and Practice.

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The Truth of it is, if the Matter be looked into and considered with a little Care and Penetration, the fine Notion of Publick Wisdom in Prejudice to the Rights of Private and Personal Discretion will appear but an empty Phantasm, the thin unsubstantial Production of a warm Imagination, that may justly be called Political Enthusiasm. However this wild and extravagant Opinion, that a Man is not to judge for himself in Matters of Obedience or Disobedience to his Superiors, being subservient to the detestable Ambition of the *Roman* Pontiffs, is still by their Creatures maintained and supported with the greatest Zeal and secular Violence: Yet that a Man must suspend the Exercise of his Reason, throw up his private Judgment, and put it into the Hands of others in Trust, to judge and believe for him, is at length a Doctrine much disgraced, and in a great Measure extinguished in this Protestant Nation, whose Reformation and Deliverance from the pernicious Errors and unsufferable Yoke of Popery is founded on this very Principle, That a Man has a Right to judge for himself, to condemn the Decisions of Publick Wisdom, and adhere to the Dictates of private Conscience and Discretion.

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Of the Duty of Princes, and all Supreme Magistrates, in respect of Religion.

SINCE all Mankind are bound by the earliest Law of Nature to acknowledge the Existence of God, and to worship and adore Him, as well in Private as in Publick, this Duty is incumbent on Princes and Supreme Rulers as well as others. They are so far from being exempted or excused from it, that they are placed in their high Station, and entrusted with their Civil Power by the King of Kings, whose Delegates and subordinate Officers they are in the Administration of his Kingdom, for this End and Purpose, that they should promote his Honour and Glory, and protect his Interests in their Dominions, and are no less accountable as his Under-Officers of State to their Supreme Lord and Ruler, than any of their Inferior and Subaltern Ministers or Generals are to them.

And since God, as I before proved, has signified his Will and Pleasure by the Light and Dictates of Nature, that Men, his reasonable Creatures, ennobled and dignified with Capacities and Faculties to know, love, praise and adore their Divine Author, should pay him not only Private, but also
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Publick Worship, and therefore should form Assemblies or Congregations, *Ecclesias*, to confess and own his Being and Providence, to acknowledge their Dependence on Him, glorify his Infinite Perfections, praise his Goodness and Mercy, and address Him with Solemn Prayer and Supplications to supply their Wants, relieve their Necessities, and deliver them from Difficulties, Snares and Dangers, since, I say, this is the Duty of Subjects, the Civil Magistrate is obliged to establish, protect and support Sacred Societies for the Worship of God in his Dominions, and to allow them all the Rights, Privileges and Powers necessary to the Well-being of such Societies.

He is therefore bound to employ his Authority in settling all Things for the Convenience, Discipline and Order of these Religious Bodies, and to give such Directions as shall tend to their Welfare and flourishing State.

This is an evident Consequence from the former Proposition. The Magistrate then is obliged to take Care that those Congregations for Divine Worship should consist of so many Members as are fit to make a Publick Assembly, and to limit each of them in such a Manner, that the Number of the Members may not be disproportioned

tioned to the Temples where they meet for Divine Worship, for this is inconsistent with the Ends of their Institution; the Individuals should therefore be so circumscribed and bounded, that those of each distinct Convention may joyn together in the same Place of Divine Service.

The Supreme Magistrate has likewise legal Authority, and is bound if he sees it conducive to their Good, to appoint general Inspectors, that may have their distinct Provinces under them, and may be commissioned to visit successively these Religious Bodies, to encourage, assist, and direct, as well as to censure them for their Faults, and admonish and perswade them to observe a more regular and pious Conduct, and lastly, to take Care of all Things for Convenience, Decency, Peace and Order.

And if any Potentate should by his Conquests extend his Dominions to a vast Compass, 'till his Empire should rival those of the *Grecian* and *Roman* Monarchs, he could have no legal Authority to constitute any one Sacerdotal Head, that should have the Inspection and Guidance of all the Religious Assemblies in his immense Dominions, much less over all the other Regions of the World, not subject to his Jurisdiction. For this being not only an unequal, but an impossible Task for one Person

Person to execute, it will contradict the evident Light of Reason, and the Law of Nature founded upon it, to set up any such unbounded Ecclesiastick Head; and if he should constitute many Overseers or Inspectors, their Provinces should be confined in such Limits as will make them capable of performing their Duty, in directing and guiding them, while they are no more in Number, than each is able to manage.

It is the Magistrate's Duty to preserve Peace and Harmony among these Bodies erected for Publick Worship, by all proper and legal Means.

If then great Differences either in respect of speculative Notions of Natural Theology, or about inferior Matters of Discipline, Modes, and Religious Rites and Ceremonies that do not affect the substantial Part of Divine Worship, should arise; while the several contending Parties raise no Disturbance or Civil Broils, nor break in upon the Peace and Tranquility of the State, the Magistrate ought by Admonitions and Perswasions to reconcile and unite the disagreeing Assemblies; but has no legal Authority, by coercive Laws, Penalties, or Forfeitures of Life, Liberty, or Estate, to compel them to a Compliance with any other Sect,

Sect, or Religious Distinction of Men, which are most in his Favour.

To use Force and Compulsion to change Mens Opinions in Religious Matters is an evident Violation of the Law of Nature or right Reason; for according to the Order of our Faculties and the Nature of Things, no Man ought or can alter his preconceived Notions, but by receiving stronger Light and superior Evidence to convince him that his Notions are wrong. Every Man conceives, reasons and concludes by his own Ideas, as he tastes by his own Palate; nor is it possible he should do otherwise. Were I ever so Ignorant or Erroneous, I could never judge more rightly and conceive more clearly by another Man's Images and Perceptions, 'till I have considered and understand them, and so made them my own, without relying on his Authority who instructed me; and therefore I can no more be justly punished for not Thinking and Believing by another Man's Understanding, which is no Standard for mine, than a blind or weak-fighted Person can deserve Pains and Penalties for not Seeing by another Man's Eyes, or a Deaf one for not Hearing by another's Ears.

Therefore since every Man is obliged to search after Truth impartially, and seriously

riously to think of Things truly as they are, if thereupon he has formed his Notions of Religion, and does not only refrain from disturbing the State, and interrupting the Tranquility of the Government, but likewise is ready to contribute in all Things to the Support and Defence of the Commonwealth, as becomes a Loyal and Faithful Subject, such a Person, I say, has a Natural Right to Protection in his Life, Liberty and Estate, because this was the very End why Civil Government was instituted; nor can any Man forfeit that Right by not thinking as another thinks in Matters of Religion. And this the Pagan Powers, led by the Light of Reason, very well understood; for tho' the Masters and Teachers of Philosophy and Morality in the Schools of *Greece* were split into many Sects and Denominations, insomuch that, as *Varro* affirms, there were no less than two hundred and eighty different Opinions about the *Summum Bonum* alone, a Question of an Important Religious Nature, yet the Civil Magistrates not Patronizing any one Distinction of Sages to the Suppressing and Exterminating of the rest, their Commonwealth continued in a peaceable and flourishing State: But suppose the Civil Powers of *Athens* had declared in Favour
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of the Sect of the Platonists, or that of the Peripateticks, or the Stoicks, and had inflicted Sufferings in Body and Estate on all other Philosophers, who did not renounce the peculiar Doctrines of their own Schools, and embrace and profess the Opinion espoused and enjoined by the Lords of *Athens*; as the Injustice of such a Procedure would have been plainly evident, so must it have been attended with intestine Strife, Feuds and Commotions, to the Dishonour and Danger of the State.

The Wisdom of *Athens* never thought fit to establish any National Philosophy, which all the Colleges of Learning under their Jurisdiction should espouse and defend; and therefore since no System was Erroneous or Right by the Decision of the Law-givers, none were ever summoned to appear before Commissioned Visitors or Tribunals of Justice, to answer for any unsound or illegal Notions of the Schools; nor did the *Athenian* Magistrates draw the Secular Sword to assist *Athenian* Eloquence, and enforce the Arguments of the Disputants on either Side; nor did they shut up any Schools of Learning, and set open the Prisons to receive the Students of any condemned Sect: They employed no Racks and Engines to screw open the Passages of the Understanding, and force
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unconvinced and reluctant Reason to swallow any disagreeable and nauseous Doctrines; for they were too Wise to think that it was a proper and just Method to drive Men with Rods, or scourge them with Whips, into Philosophical or Religious Doctrines, no not of the *Summum Bonum*, or Chief Good it self, of which, as said before, there were so great a Variety of Opinions, and of which it concerned all Men to have right Sentiments.

And while the Civil Magistrate equally favoured and indulged the disagreeing Colleges of their Sages or Wise Men, they were equally beloved and obeyed by all; for being alike interested in the peaceful and prosperous Estate of the Government, all conspired not to carry on their Contests to the Interruption or Disturbance of the Publick Tranquility. They never flew to Arms to confute and convince their Adversaries of their supposed Errors, nor disputed, Sword in Hand, about settling a Point in Physicks or Metaphysicks. The Civil Magistrate stood by and looked on, without interposing his Authority to set up the Academy, *Lycæum*, or *Stoa*, or any other Sect above the rest, but left the Scholastick Combatants to decide among themselves their Notional Controversies by un-

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bloody Syllogistical Weapons, and the Persuasive Force of Eloquence; for the wise *Athenians* well knew, that while the Schools were thus hotly engaged in Philosophical Wars, as they would not have time to attend to Matters of State and Government, so likewise they would vent all their Anger and Ill-nature (of which all Men have a Share) against one another, which otherwise, for want of such a common and commodious Drain to discharge it self, might produce State-Controversies, and by Civil Dissensions disturb the Peace of the Commonwealth.

Lest my Meaning should be mistaken in some Parts of the foregoing Discourse, I here add, that as it is the Duty of Legislators to protect, patronize and cherish Religious Assemblies or Societies for the Worship of God, so they have a Power or Right to chuse what Sect or Sects of Divine Worshippers they will establish and confirm by their Laws; and this Right or Power flows from the Obligation they lye under to promote the Honour of their Sovereign King, and succour and patronize his Adorers. The Civil Magistrate then must by the Laws of Nature be enabled or authorized to settle and establish *Ecclesias*, or Religious Societies; and if so, he must, by the same Unrevealed Law,

Law, be impowered to establish such Churches or Divine Societies which, in his Judgment, have the truest Doctrine, and have the purest and most rational Discipline; and therefore, no doubt, it is his Duty thus to chuse the best, and if he mistakes, it must be at his Peril; for he is accountable to the Supreme Being, who entrusted him with his Authority to be employed in promoting his Glory, and the Welfare of his Servants, and according to his Conformity or Disobedience to God's Will herein, he will be punished or rewarded.

Civil Magistrates or Law-givers must therefore use their impartial Judgment in settling Ecclesiastical or Sacred Societies; and when they have established by their Laws such Sects or Denominations which they believe are most acceptable to the Supreme Divine King, they ought by their Power to protect them in their Legal Rights and Immunities; and notwithstanding they are not Authorized to use Coercive Violence and Compulsion by Pains, Forfeitures and Penalties to oppress any Sects that shall dissent and refuse Compliance with the Publick Establishment, but on the contrary ought to defend them in their Ecclesiastical as well as Civil Rights and Privileges, while they demean

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themselves as becomes faithful and peaceable Subjects; they may however make great Distinction between those Assemblies they favour most, and therefore establish, that is, they may appoint for those they favour, and believe are the best and purest Denominations, the sole Use of the Publick Temples, as well as appropriate to their Pastors and Teachers the Church's Revenues for their Maintenance, and grant them other Immunities and Privileges concerning their Well-being, as well as the more effectual Discharge of their Office, as said before: And this the Magistrate may do, while however he forbears to inflict coercive Punishments and Forfeitures on any peaceable Subjects that disagree with the established Worship.

And tho' by the Laws of Nature it is the Duty, and therefore the Right of the Magistrate or Legislator to settle Sacred Congregations and Temples, wherein the established Sects that he judges are best, and therefore favours most, may have Publick Communion, in performing Divine Service, and receiving Instruction from the Pastor that the Magistrate shall appoint, yet still each Member has a Right to apply to other Pastors for Instruction and Advice in Private, and also to remove his Dwelling and Habitation, if he
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pleases, to another distant Congregation or sacred Assembly, where he may have the Benefit of the Teacher whom he chuses, without giving Offence or creating Disorder and Disturbance in the Churches.

Of Personal and Oeconomical Rights.

IT cannot be imagined that when Men combined in Political Bodies for their mutual Defence, Preservation and Well-being, they ever designed to part with their Personal and Oeconomical Rights farther than was necessary to the Ends of Civil Government; so that the Authority of the Supreme Magistrate in a Kingdom or Commonwealth extends only to such Things which are of Political Consideration, and concern the Welfare of Civil Rulers and Subjects, that is, the Publick Good; and if the Exercise of it transgresses those Limits, and encroaches upon the Natural Rights and Privileges belonging to Individuals in their personal Capacity, or as they are Fathers of Children, or Masters of Servants, it is an evident Violation of the Law of Nature, and therefore is Injustice and Oppression.

There are undoubtedly many Things, in which a Man is *sui Juris*, and where he is

at Liberty to act as he pleases; as ordinarily to chuse what Food he will eat, and what Liquor he will drink, what Garments he will wear, what Wife he will marry, what Friends and Acquaintance he will make, and what Company he will keep, how he will spend his Time, what Study or Business he will apply to, and pursue with Constancy, unless when the Supreme Magistrate should command him to take up Arms for the necessary Defence of his Country, as likewise what Books he will read, or what innocent Pastimes and Recreations he will use.

In like manner Masters of Families have several Rights and Powers peculiar to them as such. They have a Power to chuse their own Servants, and employ what Labourers they think fit to till their Lands, oversee their Substance, and work in their Service. For these being hired by the Master's own Money, their Labour is his Property, and therefore he may use it as he pleases. He has likewise a Right to rule and govern his Children, as well as Servants; to chuse the Ways and Means of their Education, and appoint what Profession and Employment they shall prepare themselves for; which however a Son adult and capable of chusing for himself may follow, or decline it and chuse another, except

cept perhaps in a few particular Instances ; he has likewise a Power to dispose of his Children in Marriage by Perswasion, but not Compulsion.

When Men entered into Political Societies for such prudent Ends, as above mentioned, they never dreamt or in the least intended to give up such Rights as those I have enumerated. He must have a whimsical Turn of Mind, and be far gone in Political Enthusiasm, who can fancy that Civil Powers may take away these Natural Rights and Privileges, either from single Persons or Governors of Families ; that Princes and Sovereign States have legal Authority to constrain a Man to marry whom they please, of whatsoever Fame, Fortune, or Deformity ; or that they should appoint them their Servants, and direct them their Business, and dispose of their Children in Marriage when and to whom they think fit ; and in short, to take upon them the sole Rule of a private Person or Family, as well as the Government of the Commonwealth.

If therefore the Supreme Magistrate should ordinarily issue forth Commands directly repugnant to and inconsistent with the natural Liberty of the Subjects, it is evident that those are only nominal Laws, that have no binding Force.

In like manner, it is a plain Dictate of the Light of Nature, that as every Man is *sui Juris* to retain what Lawyer or Physician he thinks fit, to take care of his Estate or Health, to espouse what Wife, and hire what Servants he pleases, so he has the like Right to chuse what Teacher shall instruct and teach him in any Art or Science, Philosophy, Mathematicks, Musick, &c. As likewise what Tutor or Director shall inform and assist him or his Children in Matters of Conscience and Religion, and the important Concerns of a future Immortal State. Nor can it be imagined, that when Individuals associated in civil Communities, they consented to give up these personal Rights, either Temporal or Spiritual, or any thing more than what parting with highly promoted the Ends and Purposes of Civil or Political Government, that is, the mutual Defence and Protection of the Members by salutary Laws against Domestic Enemies or Foreign Invaders: On the contrary, they formed Political Combinations for the Support and Preservation of these Personal Rights and Properties; for what other Motive or Inducement can be imagined why they should engage themselves in such Societies?

It is true, a Member of such a Community may, as said before, by his Disobedience

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ence to the Laws of his Country, forfeit his Right to his Life, and Estate, and his Privileges, as a private Person or Governor of a Family; but this is a clear Argument that antecedently he had such Rights, otherwise, as before suggested, he could never have been said to forfeit them; so that Political or Magistratical Power must be circumscribed and limited by the Nature and End of Civil Government, and cannot justly be so far extended, as to swallow up all Personal Rights, and the distinct Powers and Privileges of a Master of a Family.

Personal Right, and that of ruling Families and Civil Societies, are distinct Powers, and neither can encroach upon or invade the other, without tyrannical Injustice. It is in vain to say, that in such Governments where the Peoples Representatives have a Share in the Legislature, that those Representatives may give away the Personal Rights of private Persons, and that the Consent of the People to part with their Privileges will be included in that of their Deputies: for if an Absolute Despotick Power cannot annul the Personal Rights of the Subject, such as his Choice of a Wife, a Physician, a domestick Servant, a Teacher, &c. then the whole Legislative Power in a mixt Government cannot

not do it. The whole Legislative Power in all Forms of Civil Societies or Communities is equally extensive, and is as great, when it is all lodged in one Monarch, as it is when divided among more Persons; now the Gentlemen that say, that in mixt Governments the People may be divested of their Personal Right, do not affirm, that this may be legally done by an Arbitrary and Unlimited Prince; as if that Prince who is invested with the whole Legislative Power cannot justly do as much as a Society where that Power is placed in several Hands; for has such a mixt Government more than the whole Legislature? If therefore the first has no Warrant to take away the Subjects Personal Rights, no more has the last; and if the first is legally empowered so to do, what need is there for the Gentlemen I am disputing against to say, that the Legislature in a limited Monarchy may with the Concurrence of the People's Representatives give away their Right? for Instance, that of chusing their Instructor in Matters of Religion, their Councillor, their Servants, &c. For that mixt Constitution where the Ruling Power is lodged in several States, has surely no greater or more ample Jurisdiction than a despotick, unlimited Empire, nor can legally do any thing which the other has

no Authority to execute; and if all Supreme Powers have this Authority, what need is there for these Writers to restrain it to limited Monarchies?

It would be an absurd and extravagant Imagination to suppose, that the People, who in such a mixt Government should send their Deputies or Representatives to concur in making Laws, should entrust them with more Power than the Political Affairs of the Nation should require, even to the giving away of the Natural Rights of private Persons and Families: And whatever Representatives shall stretch their deputed Power to take from the People the Personal Immunities which they enjoy as private Persons or Masters of Families, usurp, like tyrannical Monarchs, an Authority, that was never given them by the Sovereign Ruler of the World: and therefore whenever the deputed States of any Kingdom shall transgress the Sphere of Civil Political Power, and break in upon the undoubted and unalienable Privileges of the People, whether Private or Oeconomical, they betray their Trust, and arbitrarily exceed their Commission.

Such Gentlemen should reflect, that as their Authority is restrained and circumscribed in other Respects; for Example, that they have no Power delegated to them

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to give up the People's Right to the Constitution, as it was established when they were chosen Representatives, either by resigning it entirely into the Hands of the Monarch, or by taking it all to themselves; nor to consent to the Alienation, or to the giving away of their Country to any Foreign Power or Potentate; it being most absurd to think, that the People would enable their Deputies to act against themselves, to alienate their Territories, to break up or dissolve the Frame of the Government, which they were made choice of to maintain and assist by making new Municipal Laws, and not in repealing and annulling the Fundamental or Original Constitution.

And tho' private Persons may empower their Representatives to consent to such Laws as take away their Right to their Lands and Money, and their very Lives for the Good of the Publick, by laying Taxes and Duties on their Persons or Estates, or condemning them to Death upon their Commission of any Crime destructive of the Peace and Well-being of the Government, as Treason, Sedition, Murder and Rapine; yet it is plain that such Laws concern the Being of the Civil Society, and denote a Political Authority in the Magistrate to supercede such Personal

nal Rights, the parting with which is absolutely necessary to the Preservation of the Body Politick: But the Rights I have been mentioning, which do not concern the Body Politick, and therefore which no Deputies of the People have a Power to give away (such as the Power of chusing one's Wife, Servants, governing one's Family, managing a Trade, chusing one's Physician, Lawyer, Master and Instructor, as well in Religious as Prophane Learning, and many other like Instances) are guarded and defended by the circumscriptive Limits and Partitions that divide Political and Magistratical Rights from Personal and Domestic; and therefore there are Immunities belonging to Private Men and Masters of Families distinct from the former, which they cannot give away themselves, and much less can they authorize their Representatives to destroy them, such as the free Choice of a Wife, Servant, and the rest before enumerated. And notwithstanding these private Immunities may be sometimes encroached upon by Legislators, who may think they are endowed with a more extensive Authority than they really are, yet it is evident, as I have made it appear, that Personal and Family Rights ought by the Laws of Nature, or Dictates of Right Reason, to be preserved inviolable; and if
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the Representatives of the People can give away any of them, they may alienate all: For instance, if they can take away their Right to chuse their Servants, Physician, Lawyer, Instructor in Sciences or Religious Knowledge, they may suppress their Liberty of chusing their Wives, or educating their Children and governing their Families.

It may be objected, that notwithstanding Men have the greatest Personal Right to their own Lives, yet they may by their Representatives give away that Right, who, as mentioned before, are empowered to consent in their Name to such Laws as inflict in some Cases, such as Treason, Theft or Murder, Forfeiture of Life, as well as Goods: To this I answer, that the People who chose the Representatives, did not give them such a Power over their Lives; for a private Person having no Right to take off his own Life even for the most atrocious Crime, could not endow the Magistrate with any Authority which he himself had not to give. The Right therefore that the Magistrate has to take a Criminal's Life, and indeed all other Political Powers, as I have shewn above, and more fully in my *Essay on the Law of Nature*, are communicated to them immediately from the Supreme Divine Authority, the only Source
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or Fountain of Political Power and Superiority. And therefore, tho' the People should have the Election or Nomination of a Prince, or deputed Representatives, yet their Governing or Legislative Authority is derived to them originally from the absolute Sovereign of the Universe, and declared by the Law of Nature, and Dictates of Reason, that every one named or chosen to be a Prince, or the People's Representative, shall be invested with the Political Power necessary to the Discharge of his Duty, and specified and limited by the Fundamental Laws and Rights interwoven in the Constitution. This will be illustrated by our Reflection on the Manner how Civil Power is communicated to the Inferior Magistrates of a City or Corporation, in the King's Dominions. The People assembled, elect or name such Persons for Mayors and Sheriffs; but the Civil Authority that accompanies the People's Choice or Nomination, is conveyed to them by the Royal Charter that limits and settles their Grants and Privileges. And it is the same with Generals of Armies, who have all their Power from the King's Commission, in like manner as Subaltern Officers have from the Superior; and when any People embrace a determinate Constitution or Form of Government, whether unlimited or despotick,

spotick, intrusted with a Monarch, or lodged by Repartition of Power in the Hands of more; when, I say, this particular Scheme of Government is consented to and established, the Supreme Divine Ruler signifies his Will by the Light of Nature, or collected from Self-evident Principles by the Exercise of Reason, that all should maintain this Civil Society, and pay Obedience to the Ruling Part of it; and that he intrusts that Ruling Part, either Princes or States so established, with so much of his own Legislative Authority as will enable them to Govern and Rule the Subject, according to the Fundamental Original Constitution: And he declares to the People, by the same impartial way of Reasoning, that it is his Pleasure, which constitutes all Duty, that they pay Obedience to such Magistrates. And as this is very evident to Men of Sense and Reflection, so it ought to be looked upon as the greatest Fence and Bulwark to the Thrones of all Princes and Potentates of the World, whose Authority is not secured by Revealed Religion.

But if an Absolute Monarch, who is not limited by Compacts or Legal Restrictions, should imagine, as some Imperial Salvages have done, that they may proscribe, destroy or impoverish their People

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ple as they please, as having an Arbitrary, Unbounded Power over their Dominions, and an absolute Propriety in their Subjects, as in so many rational Human Herds, they notoriously violate their Trust, and exceed their Commission from the King of Kings, to whom they, as inferior Magistrates, are accountable; who has signified, tho' not by any Positive, yet by Nature's Law discernable by impartial Reason, that tho' they are ever so Absolute and Uncontroulable, being free from all Stipulations, Vows and Agreements made with their Subjects, they are however limited by the Divine Laws of Nature to employ their delegated and subordinate Power as shall be most conducive to the Honour of their Supreme Ruler, and the End of Government; and therefore they are bound to promote the Happiness of the Civil Society of which they are inferior Rulers, as much as if they were commanded to do so by any Revealed Religion: The Light of Nature, and the Dictates of right Reason being no less Canonical and Obligatory, than the Precepts of the Inspired Publishers of the Divine Will. But for more on this Head, I refer the Reader to my Essay above-mentioned.

It is certain, that when a People have formed a Political Society, the Ruling

Part have a Right to require of the Subjects a solemn Oath or Vow to express their Allegiance to them, and by that Means assure and declare their sincere Consent, Submission and Fidelity to the Government; and those that refuse to give that Security can by no Means be accounted Members of that Political Community, or have any Claim to the Privileges of it. Nor is the Case otherwise with them, who, notwithstanding their swearing Allegiance to the Government, shall however acknowledge any Power on Earth that has Authority to absolve them of their Oath, or shall make it an Article of their Religion to obey any foreign Potentate in Opposition to their rightful Prince, to whom they have sworn Fidelity. Nor are those pretended Members of the Community, who swear to it with mental Reservations and equivocal Evasions, any more entitled to the Protection of the Government; nor they, who, with monstrous Diffimulation and unexampled Impiety, shall take a solemn Oath enjoined by the Magistrate to engage them to be true to the Government, yet believe and declare that such an Oath is invalid, and without any obligatory Virtue, merely because it is imposed and commanded by the Civil Powers. This impious

pious and detestable Maxim, which Many have of late asserted to save themselves from Forfeitures and Incapacities, is of that Importance, that it saps and undermines the Foundation of all Political Societies, and should, in my Opinion, be discountenanced and attacked by the Legislature by such Remedies as shall be looked upon most proper and expedient; for if an Oath, because imposed by the Magistrate, has for that Reason no binding Quality, then farewell all Sincerity, Truth and Allegiance, and with them all Bodies Politick.

From what has been said it may plainly be discerned that a Man Irreligious in Principle, or an Atheist in Speculation, can be no Member of a Kingdom or Commonwealth, or can justly claim any Immunities that Subjects enjoy; and the Reason is very clear, that since he can give no Security to the Government that he will be subject to it according to its Constitution, he can be intitled to no Rights or Privileges that belong to the Subjects as Subjects, for he is incapable of shewing his Consent to be a Member of the Society; for whatever Declarations, Oaths or Vows he makes, which is an Appealing or calling God to witness of his Veracity, they are no more than a Collusion or

a Jest, whilst in his Mind he denies and ridicules the Existence of that God, by whose Name he swears, and all Divine Punishments on the Account of Perjury. And therefore surely Princes should be very cautious how they employ such impious Persons, as Ministers of State or Leaders of their Armies, whose Allegiance and Fidelity to them cannot be secured by the most solemn Ties and Protestations.

Some Persons imagine, that a Disbeliever of the Divine Existence may however be depended upon, when he engages his Honour for any Performance. But Honour without Religion is an illusive, chimerical Phantome, an empty, insignificant Sound, that occasions no Idea in the Mind, represents no Object, and is utterly incapable of any Definition or Explanation. The essential Notion of true Honour involves in it a Principle of Religion or a Divine Rule of our Actions, and then it may be described A generous Elevation of the Mind, by which it is set free from all mean, base and unworthy Inclinations and Habits, sordid Condescensions and vile Compliances; and thus it is plainly to be denominated a Virtue or Moral Endowment, that disposes or effectually inclines a Man to act in Conformity to the Divine Will declared by the Light of Nature; and so a Man of Honour

nour is in synonymous Words a Man of Probity, Integrity, Truth and Fidelity; but these are Habits or Principles of Virtue or Moral Goodness, from which Religion cannot be abstracted: For there can be no Virtue or Morality without a God, whose preceptive Will must be the Rule, in a Conformity to which its very Being consists. Whence it appears that an Atheist is incapable of Honour, Probity, Sincerity, or any other Religious or Moral Endowment; and that an impious or irreligious Man of Honour, are repugnant and inconsistent Terms, and presents to the Mind two Ideas that are destructive of each other. But I shall say no more on this Subject, having spoken of it before, where I discoursed of the Fountain of Moral Good and Evil, as likewise in the Preface to *Creation*, where I have shewn, that it is in vain to attempt a Demonstration of the Law of Nature, or the Obligation of Moral Precepts without Revelation, from any other Principles, and by any other Way, than that by which I have deduced it: and therefore all other Methods of shewing the binding Force of the Laws of Nature, or the Dictates of Reason, whether from such Precepts engraven on our Natures and written in our Hearts, Eternal Verities existing out of the Divine Mind, the Digni-

ty of Human Nature, or the swelling Word, Honour, should be given up, and no longer insisted upon, as utterly incapable of expressing the Divine Will concerning our Duty. And it is indeed the great Disgrace of the Pagan Schemes of Morality, and what destroys the Notion of a Law of Nature, that the Compilers of them have laid down only naked Duties, or preceptive Propositions concerning Mens Passions and Actions, but they never tell us how or why we are bound to the Observance of such Prescripts; and therefore the Moral Rules of *Cicero*, *Seneca*, *Epietetus*, *M. Aurelius*, &c. are empty Propositions, meer Commands of those Philosophers, as if they were Legislators to Mankind: and what is a Command without a *vis Obligativa*, but a lifeless, tho' splendid, Moral Saying, unanimated with any Preceptive Authority? And therefore should any Man with indefatigable Industry, common-place all the Moral Rules to be found in all the most celebrated Volumes of the Pagan Philosophers, this would be no more than a dead insignificant Letter of a Law, unaccompanied with binding Authority, and only the Conceits and Opinions of Moral Sages, and not a Collection of Divine Statutes and Ordinances, unless by just Argumentation and a right Deduction
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from Rational Principles, they make it appear, which they never did, that it is the commanding Will and Pleasure of the King of Kings, that Mankind should observe, in Obedience to him, such Rules and Directions concerning their Lives and Practices, which those Philosophers enjoyed, and which are often different from and repugnant to each other. They have not shewn that either their Supreme God *Jupiter* alone, or at the Head of a Senate of the Inferior Gods, did ever constitute or enact their Systemes of Moral Duties, or that they ever inspired any of their Priests and Prophets to promulge them to the World; and it is utterly incredible, that their Gods should enact and publish such Laws as must necessarily include their own Condemnation, and shew them to be a most vicious and immoral Set of Beings, unworthy of Imitation; and therefore Objects of Abhorrence, rather than Adoration. Whence the Pagan wise Men are so far from proclaiming the Laws of Nature, that they have scarcely suggested them so as to be read and understood by Men of Sense and Penetration. And tho' many of their Rules of Practice were really Divine Precepts, discoverable by the Exercise of Right Reason and the Light of Nature, yet the Heathen Philosophers did never so far

exert their Reason as to make it appear that their Moral Injunctions were backed with Divine Authority, and so became Obligatory Laws. For they never so much as attempted to demonstrate or deduce them from their proper Fountain. But they are Moral Conjectures and Dictates of their own, Rules of Practice which those Sages were led to by the imperfect glimmering Leavings of inbred Light, and the obscure Dictates of Conscience unextinguished by natural Corruption: And hence it is, that the Moral Precepts and Injunctions delivered by the ancient Sages are often inconsistent with the Dictates of right Reason, as well as opposite to one another, as said before.

There are three eminent Instances of the first, in their Notions of the Passions, Self-murder, and Fame. *The Stoicks*, from a great Intellectual Impotence, taught their Disciples, instead of Regulating, to endeavour the Extirpation of their Passions, as Distempers and Diseases of the Soul; that so they might heal and purify their Minds by extinguishing Human Nature, and advance Men to compleat Happiness by making them incapable of Joy and Delight. Their Doctrine of putting an End to their Lives by voluntary Violence to avoid Shame and Suffering, is a manifest Violation of the Dictates of Reason, and an Outrage done to the

the Principle of Self-preservation implanted in each Individual, by which the Author of their Beings declares his Will that they should not destroy themselves, and an Usurpation of a Right and Power of disposing of their Lives at their Pleasure, which tho' they are their own in respect of Man, they are not so in respect of God, who is their absolute Owner and Proprietor, and never delegated to them a Power of dissolving their Beings; but has clearly declared, they should preserve and support, and not destroy them from Uneasiness and Discontent with their Condition, and the Dispensations of his Providence.

And the setting up of Fame and Glory as the ultimate End of great and worthy Actions, as the eloquent Moralist *Cicero*, as well as many others, has done, while they seek Honour and Applause for themselves, without referring them, and making them subservient in their Intention to the Glory of the Divine Being, is an evident Transgression of the Dictates of Natural Reason, while by this Procedure a Man cuts off his Dependence and Subordination to God his Supreme End, and with manifest Impiety Deifies himself, and makes a Creature the final Object of his Designs and Actions. Yet Fame and Glory, after which they feel such an avaricious Thirst, was looked upon, especially

cially by the best of the *Romans*, as the Genuine Mark of sublime and heroick Virtue, or at least as the chief Reward of it.

By what has been said, it evidently appears, that even the wisest and most virtuous of the *Pagans* were utterly at a Loss how to account for the Obligatory Force of the Laws of Nature, and how to deduce them by the Exercise of Reason from their only Fountain, the Preceptive Authority of the Supreme Being. And this Eclipse of Natural Light and Impotence of Reason from original Corruption, together with the Dearth of Virtue, and Prevalency of Vice and Impiety, that before the coming of the Christian Redeemer had to an astonishing Degree, like a loathsome and contagious Leprosy, universally overspread the Race of Mankind, as all History attests, shews how much the unhappy World lay under the Want of a supernatural Revelation, which might inform Men more clearly of the Preceptive Will of God, to which they were to pay Obedience, and be made acquainted how they might recover his Favour, and escape the Punishment due to their Disobedience. And this naturally leads us to consider the Christian Institution, which pretends to be what is really a supernatural Divine Revelation, for all the happy Purposes before mentioned.

Of

*Of the Desirableness and Necessity of a
Supernatural Revelation.*

THO' the Laws of Nature, that I have enumerated, and many more, are plainly deducible from their proper Fountain, by the Way I have shewn : It is however highly probable, if not certain, that had I never been acquainted with the Christian Revelation, nor had my Understanding never been improved and exalted by its Lights, I should never have been able to discern the Connexion between the Premises and Conclusions I have drawn, nor by the Exercise of unassisted Reason have collected these unwritten Laws as I have done; and I believe this to be the Case of others.

It is certain, that till the Coming of Christ no such Systeme was produced, none of the celebrated Schools of Learning, that flourished in *Greece* or *Italy*, tho' improved and enriched with all the Sciences of *Egypt* and the East, were ever able to enumerate the Laws of Nature, to derive them from their proper Springs, and demonstrate their obliging Force. They had no General Creed or Confession of Faith, or Statute Book of Nature, which they all approved and allowed to be an Authentick Rule of Heart and Life. On the contrary, their Sages
were

were split into various Sects, that maintained great Diversities of Opinions, some of which were opposite to one another, as said before; nor were there any universal Synods of leading Philosophers convened to determine these Controversies, and set forth a true Collection of the Laws of Reason, and declare what Opinions were Heretical and what Orthodox; whence their Doctrines about Natural Duties were either false, or exceeding lame and defective.

But nothing more shews the Disability and universal Blindness of the Pagan Nations, than their detestable Opinions concerning the Deity, their Plurality of Gods, the Division of their Divinities into different Sexes, their Dæmon-worship, the wicked and impious Customs and Ceremonies celebrated in Honour of those Deities, and their Belief of their Personal Vices and abominable Practices; who, according to their own Account of them, were as loose and flagitious, as those of the most abandoned Libertines among Men. Now it is a natural Consequence, that when the Gods which are worshipped are believed to be immoral and impure, that the Votaries, who think they are bound to imitate their Divinities, and that the Perfection, Felicity and Glory of their Natures consist in such a Conformity to their Example, should plunge themselves

selves in the Dregs of Vice and Immoral Uncleaness, by which they should not only Atoned and Obey them, but by resembling their Divine Nature, acquire the greatest Dignity and Happiness to their own. And in this monstrous and horrible State of Religion the worst of Vices became Acts of Piety and Devotion, while the Gods and Goddesses were supposed to be appeased and delighted with the highest Violations of Chastity, Temperance, Justice and Natural Affection, when committed as Expressions of Worship and Honour paid to them. Nor is it a wonder that in this deplorable Condition and general prevailing Power of Idolatry, Mankind should grow still worse and worse, 'till the most profound Darkness and miserable Stupidity should oppress their Minds, and a licentious Flood of corrupt and vitiated Manners defile their Lives, as it appears by the History of all Countries they did, a little before the Appearance of CHRIST the Messiah.

Since then such Blindness of Understanding and Pollutions of Practice were, in those dark and degenerate Ages, carried on to such an amazing Height, and had gained such an extensive Dominion over Mankind, that it must be granted that a Supernatural Revelation of the Will of
God

God to be made known by some Teacher sent and commissioned by him, to instruct and inform Mankind concerning their Duty to him, to enlighten their Understandings, regulate their Notions, and extricate them from the dark Labyrinths of Errors, in which they were bewildered, and utterly unable to find their Way how to Please and Atone their Blest Creator, was, before the coming of Christ, not only very desirable, and even necessary to Mankind, but likewise most worthy of God, and most becoming his Glorious Perfections of Love, Mercy and Compassion; Man being rendered, by reason of his Intellectual Darkness and Moral Impotence, quite Incapable of finding out the Way of being restored to the Love and Favour of God, and of recovering his lost Innocence and Felicity; and therefore a new Discovery of the Will of God was to be Wished or Hoped for, by which Men might be enlightened and directed to the Way of Salvation, and be reinstated in a more sure and happy Condition.

I have thus demonstrated the Moral Laws of Nature; but shall not only say, like the Author of *Natural Religion delineated*, that I do not mean that any thing I have said should prejudice any true and revealed Religion; or Words to
that

that purpose: Now it was so necessary and so pertinent in that Place to have asserted, that the Christian Institution was such a Divine Revelation, that I cannot imagine how the Author, had he embraced that Religion, could have forborn the naming of it as a Divine Revelation, and not have flurred it off with that sneering, shy and drest Expression; and therefore I must say, that, all Things considered, whatever some Gentlemen have alledg'd to excuse and soften that Sentence, the Author to me seems much to be suspected of Unchristian Principles, which I suppose is the Reason why he was so much caressed and applauded by the Enemies of Reveal'd Religion; tho' what they have gained by him, I cannot conceive, except another supposed Instance of a learned Infidel.

What has been said, naturally leads us to consider the Validity of the Christian Scheme or Institution, and to shew that it is a Divine Revelation intended for all the happy Purposes before mentioned. And this, if Providence shall afford Life and Health, shall be attempted in another Treatise.

F I N I S.

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